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ABSTRACT

This document is a transcript of a United States Senate subcommittee hearing which was conducted to review the effort the Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration have undertaken to hire and train new air traffic controllers to take the places of those controllers who went on strike in August, 1981, and were subsequently fired. Testimony was given by J. Lynn Helms, Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and by John Edwards, vice president, air traffic, Professional Association of Aeronautical Center Employees, with additions by their staff members. Mr. Helms testified that the FAA is beginning to train 500 new controllers a month to replace those who were fired, with a goal of bringing the traffic controllers' ranks up to or above the previous strength in about 3 years. He said that the training, which is conducted by the FAA Academy and the University of Oklahoma, is maintaining the same high standards it has always held, and that many retired controllers had been or would be called back to supplement the training force. Mr. Edwards, head of the Union of Traffic Controller Instructors, testified that the instructors' morale was low because they had been left out of a pay raise package proposed for field controllers; because they had lost the benefit of working regular hours--for which they had signed on at the Academy; and because they had not received any appreciation from the FAA for staying on their jobs during the strike. He also said bureaucratic regulations were making it difficult for instructors to care about or help their students. Additional statements by Earl Hobbs, Jr., Air Traffic Contoller, and James King, Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, were read into the record. (KC)

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ED215179

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS TESTING AND TRAINING PROGRAM

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-SEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS TESTING AND TRAINING PROGRAM

DECEMBER 16, 1981

Serial No. 97–84

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AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS TESTING AND TRAINING PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1981

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION,
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 10 a.m. in room 235 of the Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Nancy Landon Kassebaum (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR KASSEBAUM

Senator KASSEBAUM. The hearing will come to order.

It's a pleasure to welcome the first panel here on a snowy morning at the close of this session. But I believe it's an important hearing, and I think you do, too, on an issue that has a great deal of interest to us in fully understanding the safety of our airway system.

On August 3, approximately 11,500 air traffic controllers illegally walked off their jobs. We can all look back and feel that no one was the winner in that particular situation.

But I, along with most of the other members of this committee, and indeed the Congress, have been strongly supportive of the actions of the President, the Department of Transportation, and the Federal Aviation Administration in dealing with this crisis.

Nevertheless, we cannot overlook the negative impact of the controllers' illegal action. Because of the reduction in the controller work force, our air traffic system today is estimated to be operating at about 75 percent of prestrike capacity.

Twenty-two of the largest airports are now slot-restricted, and more airports are restricting operations as the FAA works to keep the demand on the en route control centers at reasonable levels.

These restrictions impose economic hardships on the air carrier, commuter, and general aviation industries. And the Congress, the airline industry, and the direct and indirect beneficiaries of air commerce are anxious to see the air traffic control system back to normal operating levels as soon as possible.

As a result of the controllers' action, the DOT and FAA have undertaken a massive effort to hire and train new controllers to take their place. The purpose of this hearing is to review that effort, to determine what, if anything, can or should be done to improve the process and to assure the FAA and other responsible agencies that the Congress stands ready to assist in the rebuilding process.

I particularly appreciate, as I say, your coming this morning to help answer some of the questions that are not only in the minds of Congress, but I think, more importantly, in the mind of the flying public. I would like to welcome you, Mr. Helms, as Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, and compliment you on the work that you and your assistants have done at the FAA in really a very productive way, keeping a calm and reasonably satisfactory system going. And I think that a large share of the plaudits should go to you and others at FAA.

Welcome to this hearing.

STATEMENT OF J. LYNN HELMS, ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION, ACCOMPANIED BY BENJAMIN DEMPS, JR., DIRECTOR, MIKE MONRONEY AERONAUTICAL CENTER; DONALD ROCK, DIRECTOR, PERSONNEL AND TRAINING; AND JAMES BISPO, ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR, AIR TRAFFIC AND AIRWAY FACILITIES

Mr. HELMS. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I appreciate your complimentary remarks. My only regret is that the people who are engaged in the active control process along with the people who are technicians and flight specialists, who have made this system work, haven't heard them also.

I request that we be allowed to submit a full statement for the record. However, I would like to summarize it in the interest of saving time for the committee and the Chair.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Thank you.

Mr. HELMS. With me this morning to answer questions are Don Rock, our Director of Personnel and Training; Ben Demps, Director of the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center, where all of our traffic controllers undergo their initial academy training; and James Bispo, the Associate Administrator for Air Traffic and Air Facilities.

As was noted by the chairman, about 11,400 controllers were lost due to the PATCO strike. Due to previous overstaffing, we plan to add only 8,000 controllers in the next 2 to 3 years.

The point of emphasis I wish to make is that the FAA has not ever considered, has not contemplated, and has firmly made the decision that we will not cut corners in any way in training new controllers. Safety is paramount and will not be compromised.

We will maintain our stringent standards for hiring and training controllers.

The FAA Academy instruction work force, augmented by retired controllers, provided under contract by Oklahoma University can provide training for students entering the academy at about 500 per month. Additional numbers could not be satisfactorily absorbed by field facilities for further training. And I emphasize "satisfactorily," because, in fact, it's that final training in the facility which hones the edge and makes the controller truly productive.

Hiring furloughed pilots and ex-military personnel to perform noncontrol functions at facilities will free up the controller force to provide adequate training to these new recruits. Retired controllers may also be hired to provide training.

I should emphasize, however, that many of those people will not control live traffic—hence the subject of current physical as regard to air traffic controllers is not an item. The large applicant pool, screened by a new entrance exam is expected to provide enough qualified candidates to be trained for controller positions.

The first post-strike class had a poor pass rate due to a number of factors. Many were appointed noncompetitively. Most had no AT experience. Many did not have high scores on the entrance exam.

The new applicant pool and improved entrance exams are expected to lead to a higher pass rate.

Academy training is 15 weeks for the terminal option and 12 weeks for the en route option. Nothing has been dropped from the training program.

General orientations and/or indoctrination courses have been moved from field facilities to the academy. This varied from 1 to 3 weeks.

Academy radar training has been sequenced to occur just prior to field radar qualification training. This recognizes the fact, of course, that all controllers do not have to undergo radar training.

OPM has agreed to waive time and grade requirements in order to allow controllers to be promoted as fast as their abilities allow. This is expected to accelerate the movement of developmentals to the full performance level by about 1 year. No skill-related FAA qualification requirements are eliminated or reduced.

I wish to emphasize, finally, that this rapid promotion will be allowed only in the event that the individual has demonstrated completely satisfactory performance at the higher level.

Finally, no step or action of any kind is planned, programed, or underway that reduces our stringent standards or in any way decreases safety.

Madam Chairman, we'll be happy to answer your questions as the committee would like.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Thank you very much.

You mentioned that you believed that within the 2 or 3 years you would be back to full level of operation. What number of controllers do you believe will be essential for a full capacity system?

Mr. HELMS. When we refer to capability of the system internally, we divide this into two areas. One is capacity, and one is timeliness.

"Capacity" means we could handle x percent of the traffic. But "timeliness" is the ability of the individual general aviation pilot or scheduled air taxi, nonscheduled, to be able to call up immediately and get a clearance.

Our schedule is that in 21 months from last August—and that schedule still looks valid—we will be able to handle 100 percent of the capacity in the 24-hour day. However, some control to level out the peaks will be required in the succeeding 12 months.

So as regards capacity, we will have full capacity in 21 months and we will have the system "back to normal," which is what we refer to at the 36-month point.

I should also note that in an effort to insure we have adequate experience, understanding, and maturity, it would be about another year after that. Phasing in our manpower over that time is such that we will peak out at about 14,500 controllers. And we do

that on purpose. That is, we exceed what will be required, because we have a number of retirements, some 2,500. After those people retire, it will come back down to about 12,500.

We expect that we will have a level of about 12,500 controllers when we have both 100 percent capacity and the system back to normal.

Senator KASSEBAUM. About 12,500. That's more than we have now.

Mr. HELMS. Yes, ma'am, it is.

Senator KASSEBAUM. How do you project this with the plan to utilize far more computer operations in the system?

Mr. HELMS. We have just completed--and this week I briefed the first three House committees on the new FAA's system plan. This is a plan that started in development some 11 months ago. And for the first time there's a total systems engineering effort. That is, it is not just the computer. It is the computer, the software, the display suite, the new radar, all of those things put together.

That plan will take approximately 9 years to completely unfold. At that end of that time period, we will be down to about 9,500 controllers. That's all that will be required.

During that period of time, due to retirements, we will still have to train and bring aboard a continual flow of controllers.

Senator KASSEBAUM. I understand that proposals have been presented to the FAA which would involve contracting out for controllers to train new controllers on the job at route centers and towers.

Will the FAA consider contracting out for personnel? And how many such individuals could be brought into the system sooner using this technique?

Mr. HELMS. We are not able to find a place other than the University of Oklahoma. The reason they are capable is because we have had an ongoing relationship with them for some years that can provide an immediate capability to help us train.

I have to answer your question in two veins. One is the short term, that is coming back to the 100 percent capacity, the 24-month period. The other is in the long term. In the long term, we're looking for academic institutions to undertake this, to provide us a good, high-level capability, such as the program being considered at the University of North Dakota.

In the interim period, the only way we can meet our requirement is to use our facilities at the technical center, our own academy, and the capability of the University of Oklahoma. We have complete ability at the academy now. We have completed 6 new working laboratories and 1 new simulation laboratory to handle the throughput—that is, the 500-plus a month that's necessary to rebuild. And I would not be satisfied that we could handle more than 500 a month in the facilities. This comes back to our capability to provide on-the-job training.

So, in summary, Madam Chairman, I doubt that we would use separate contract facilities of any kind during this time period.

Senator KASSEBAUM. It's not then just a question of funding available to you. Do you feel if there were more funding for the FAA, specifically for training purposes, that could be improved?

Mr. HELMS. I have no reason to believe that the training program is not completely funded and fully funded. The final determi-

nation, as regards either reallocation by OMB, has not been made subject to the continuing resolution. So, until such time as that final figure is established, I couldn't specifically say yes or no. But at this sitting I have no reason to believe that we need additional funds to complete our program on schedule.

Senator KASSEBAUM. The salary and benefit package that the FAA sent to Congress for controllers who remained on the job would permit retired controllers to be brought back on a temporary basis, without adversely impacting on their retirement benefits. Could you explain this provision to us. And what would the impact on the system be, bringing these retired individuals into the training system?

Mr. HELMS. First, Madam Chairman, the most important aspect of that whole provision covers two items.

One is it sunsets on December 31, 1984, so we are not in any way asking for a long term or a permanent item. This is just to help us through the next 36 months.

Second, there is a pool of approximately 3,000 former controllers who have retired over the last 3 years that are available. I say available, in that they could be contacted. But those people are not too keen to return and give up their present jobs if they face the loss of their pension. Therefore, this provision is intended to bring those people aboard.

And incidentally, most of them would not stay 24 months—we wouldn't need them for the full time period—but to bring those people aboard and help us during this time period.

For example, in the New York area, which is one of our hardest hit areas, there are a number of retired controllers. Rather than hire people somewhere else, pay the moving expenses and train someone else to go into New York, if we have this provision accepted during the next 18 to 24 months, we could rehire those people, bring them back aboard right in New York, pay no additional moving expenses, and certify them very rapidly. It's that type of benefit we would get from this.

So, it is purely an interim measure.

Second, we see no difficulty in bringing them into the system at all.

Senator KASSEBAUM. I'm sorry. How many did you say?

Mr. HELMS. There is a total pool of 3,000 from which we can draw. We do not intend to come anywhere near that. And I'm confident that there would not be 3,000 of them that would agree to it. Many of them have retired for their own reasons, many of them have moved to other areas.

We envision that somewhere between 500 and 700, however, would be glad to come back during this time period. We've had many inquiries from them.

Senator KASSEBAUM. If the salary schedule could be worked out to accommodate and not in any way damage their retirement benefits.

Mr. HELMS. Yes, ma'am.

As a matter of fact, we have 280 of these who are back to work now. There are others who have said, "If you can satisfy me that I will not lose my pension benefits, I'd love to come back, because I

understand from my friends that now it's different, they're having fun. And I'd look forward to doing it again."

Senator KASSEBAUM. As you know, we attempted to add that at the time of the continuing resolution, and we were not successful at that point on the pay package. I'm hopeful that we can adjust that, because I think it is important that we resolve that.

Mr. HELMS. We certainly feel very strongly about it, Madam Chairman, because the group of people whom we have out now have just done an outstanding job. And our recovery program thus far is, in fact, moving ahead of schedule.

For example, 54 percent of our controllers are now on a 40-hour week. Now, those people who are making some statements from the street just don't want to accept those numbers, but it's the simple truth. Eighty-nine percent of our controllers only work between 44 and 48 hours a week. We have purposely built this pad in to give people time off over Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. And we intend to stay with that. That's the reason we are controlling the traffic levels through January. But the recovery system is coming right on schedule, and probably even a little bit ahead.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Representatives from the Professional Association of Aeronautical Center Employees, who will be testifying later this morning, indicate concern about the fact that the recent legislation introduced by the Department of Transportation to increase benefits and provide for the premium pay for air traffic and airway facility personnel excludes FAA Academy personnel. What is the justification for this distinction?

Mr. HELMS. Madam Chairman, I have never known anyone yet that felt good when he did not get a pay increase, so I can fully understand this impact on them. The justification, however, comes down basically into three areas:

One, this is not intended to be an FAA pay increase for all employees. Rather, it is a recognition of the responsibility that both people who stayed with us and the future have for controlling live traffic. The key to this is only those personnel that are associated with live traffic are the ones that are impacted by that provision of the bill.

Second, those people that rotate to the academy on a training program as an instructor are not permanently committed there. They volunteer, they come in, and after a period of time, after 3 years—it's 2 years now, it will go to 3 years—they have the election to return to the facility. So, hence, they will gain the same benefits that go along with it.

Third, I feel an obligation to the American taxpayer to not arbitrarily increase the cost of the Government. Therefore, we have purposely narrowed the bill down to those people who are actively engaged on a day-to-day basis to keep the Nation's air commerce moving.

Those, collectively, are the reasons. And I am in no way surprised--I can fully understand their feelings. But at some point in time we have to be able to draw the line.

And live traffic is where the responsibility and the concern is. It was for that reason that I constructed that narrow confine, if you will, for those people who will be impacted.

Senator KASSEBAUM. I think one of the concerns that they've expressed is that the morale among the instructors at the academy is quite low, particularly in light of the decision not to include them in the pay package. Do you feel that that is a factor, would be a factor? Do you feel that indeed, morale is a problem at the academy?

Mr. HELMS. Yes, I think it probably is. Just this past week I was sufficiently concerned that I asked the Deputy Administrator to visit a number of facilities and end up at the academy. The reason was that we wanted to measure the morale of the operating organizations as compared to the academy. I don't think there's any question in my mind that the lack of being included in the pay package had a negative impact on their morale.

Additionally, some more things which they perceive as additional items were not included. But I would note for the chairman that when the strike occurred and these people who were working illegally walked off of their jobs, a not insignificant number of members of the union were instructors at the academy, and they of course were not in that position. Therefore, I am not surprised that there is perhaps some reflection of this attitude, because some of them are very strong members of the union and agreed with it 100 percent.

That doesn't say I'm satisfied with it. That's my job, to turn it around and raise morale back again.

I would note one interesting parallel. We have now over 300 instructors that are retired people. Others have been brought back to work by the University of Oklahoma. Morale among that group is extremely high. They are enthused, they are working hard, they have the same standards, they go through the same qualification course. So this is just one more task I have. I've just got to get this morale back up.

Senator KASSEBAUM. I'm just curious on the clarification because I don't understand. The instructors at the academy rotate. Is this what you say—they may be there 2 or 3 years. Then they go back to control work?

Mr. HELMS. Yes, ma'am. They have, if you will, a contract in which, for example, a senior controller perhaps working in the Cleveland center or at O'Hare agrees to go to the academy and we "sign a contract" with him that he will not have to stay there permanently. He knows how long he's going to be there so he can make his arrangements for his family. We value very highly that we do not have any more of a negative impact than is necessary. After the initial 2 year period he and we sit down and talk, and both of us agree—would you like to stay another 2 years or would you like to go back to your facility?

Let's assume for the moment he says I'd like to stay another 2 years. He does. At the end of that 2 years we do the same thing, would you like to stay another 2 years? It has been our practice in the past not to let them stay more than 6 years. So he has an option during those time periods.

Senator KASSEBAUM. The same benefits that he would be receiving as a controller would be carried along at the time through his work as a trainer?

Mr. HELMS. No. The portions of the pay provisions issued for on-the-job training and those items which are directly associated with live traffic, he would not retain if he left an organization and came into the academy. When he had returned from the academy and they go back——

Senator KASSEBAUM. But there would be an accrual, I assume, over time of benefits?

Mr. HELMS. Oh, yes, ma'am. He is not deprived in any way, except for the benefits of his pay package which is associated solely with live traffic control.

Senator KASSEBAUM. You say some leave to become instructors. In Oklahoma City, or there is no transfer there necessary at all?

Mr. HELMS. No, ma'am. There is no transfer there. What we have there is a means whereby over the years we have used the university to meet our very rapid expansion. The university can go out and hire people, and hence, they do not lose their pension. They then become an employee of the university.

Incidentally, they are hired at lower salaries than our experienced people make that come into the academy. That notwithstanding, the university hires those people. They then go through exactly the same training program, every qualification. They are then instructors right along with our regular staff.

Senator KASSEBAUM. And at Oklahoma City they are employees of the University of Oklahoma?

Mr. HELMS. Yes, ma'am.

Senator KASSEBAUM. How many students can be trained at the academy versus Oklahoma City?

Mr. HELMS. The academy is an integral part there at Oklahoma City. All of the controller training is done there. It's one large operation and we can handle over 500 a month, and our program is set up—that is, as regards entry and exit. We have, for example, over 2,000 students at any particular time at its peak, because of the rotating system. That is, there's one continually overflowing another. But our program is based on over 500 students a month coming in, with the expected attrition rate in the range of 30 to 35 percent. That would mean that we would be having about 300 a month graduate.

Senator KASSEBAUM. One of the concerns expressed at the time of the report is that there had been an unusually large number that have failed in the last class, I believe it was. The concern was that there had perhaps not been the early prescreening done, or that there had been an attempt to escalate the training.

Do you believe, as you obviously do from your opening statement, that this is now under control and that the escalation in the process in no way would affect the degree and depth of training?

Mr. HELMS. I have absolutely no hesitance about the consistency of our training. But I think it would be more appropos to let Mr. Demps answer it, because he knows the details specifically. Ben?

Mr. DEMPS. Madam Chairman, the training has not changed, as Mr. Helms stated earlier. The force remains the same. The testing instruments at the academy remain the same. The standardized approach to training remains the same, as well. The loss rate, which I believe you referred to, I think it was around 50 percent of an input sometime in late August, was not unusual when one views

the history of the air traffic developmental training program at the academy. We have had higher failure rates than 50 percent, upward of 57, if I recall correctly, sometime in 1977-78, and we have had lower—as far down as 18-percent in about the same time period. It depends upon the mix of student employees who are attending a course at any one time.

Let me also remark that following that class of 50 percent failure rate there was a class with a 34-percent failure rate in the en route area, and a class with a 18-percent failure rate in the terminal area, some 5 or 6 days later. The tracking instruments that we use for our air traffic training clearly show the rises and falls of each class as they proceed through the system.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Let me ask about the lower percentages you mentioned, because I don't understand the training process that well. Were these trainees that had come in at approximately the same time or earlier, and had progressed that much futhur along in the system?

Mr. DEMPS. Generally, the two classes that I specifically mentioned came in at about the same time. However, the mix of students depends upon what employing jurisdictions they come from, from what point do they come in off the OPM registers. There was another critical factor after the August 3 illegal strike. The Administrator, in his decisions, put people who could qualify, that is people who had prior military experience of 24 months or more, directly into the facilities as GS-9 flight data aides. Those people would normally have been in that mix of students and normally would have fared better than others within that class.

So in analyzing the results of those courses, one can see that the factors are at one point, one comes in off the OPM register or that one comes in in a noncompetitive register, another one has had previous air traffic control experience. Those are the factors that tend to cause course input grades to differ.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Do you still have the same test procedures to screen applicants, or have you devised some new tests for screening applicants?

Mr. DEMPS. In answer to that question, Madam Chairman, we still use the same testing devices—that is, we scramble our tests. We have a data bank of test questions that is on the handwritten test, and we have a computer that provides us with different simulated control problems. But on the other side of that, our method for grading those tests, that is, the handwritten tests, I have recently changed as a result of some problems we had about 3 weeks ago now when we found errors in the reporting of the grades. We made an interim change. I am using scanners versus hand checking and a correlation of those two to report our grades.

Mr. HELMS. I think she's also interested in the initial screening test for applicants.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Because that had been in the reports in the press earlier on, in analyzing why, perhaps—and I think there have been some who speculated that the high percentage was due to the fact that in attempting to train early on as many controllers as possible, that the prescreening had not been as strict as it might have been normally, or should be.

Mr. DEMPS. My answer to that is that there is a difference in the induction examinations that are being used now. I would have to ask Mr. Rock, the Director of our personnel office who is quite familiar with that, to answer, if you will permit.

Mr. ROCK. Yes. We have developed, over the last 5 years, a new entrance examination that the Office of Personnel Management placed into operation in August of this year. It has been administered to approximately 50,000 applicants in your air traffic control jobs. We anticipate from those who have taken the examination that we'll have approximately 25,000 to 26,000 qualified applicants from that test.

The test was developed and validated using both applicant populations who applied for positions prior to August. It also had been administered experimentally to full performance journeymen controllers as well as developmental controllers and trainees at the academy. The total that were validated was approximately 16,000 applicants, controllers, and developmental controllers. We do believe that it will show improvement in the selection of the new hires that are coming in the system and will result in a lower failure rate.

Mr. HELMS. Madam Chairman, I think there are two other items on that. Both we and the Department of Defense have been concerned about the attrition rate. For example, the average in the Air Force runs about 27 percent; in the Navy, around 35 percent; and ours, 30 to 35 percent; so that this test was devised well before August 3. It had no connection whatsoever with the illegal strike on August 3. Even more importantly, this is a more difficult test. It is not a less difficult test. The whole intent is to have a higher level of capability, of people who are going in.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Is there a washout during the course from the trainees, so that as it goes along there is an analysis of where it's at and whether a person in the process is going to be able to meet the standards along the way?

Mr. DEMPS. Yes. There is a post-academy course, a washout device. Each person who graduates from the academy enters into on-the-job training in field facilities. That training is divided into various phases extending upward of 2 to 2½ years, depending upon what level of complexity the facility is that the individual works. The individual must pass each successive course phase.

We've done a comparative analysis since 1976 on over 8,000 people who have entered into the system, and we find that through the teaching and testing procedures of the academy we have approximately a 35-percent failure rate at the academy, but only about a 7-percent, 7½-percent later attrition rate in the on-the-job training. This compares most favorably to what had occurred prior to 1976 when we had about a 38-percent failure rate in the field facilities.

The important distinction, however, is that that failure rate occurred later in the facilities prior to 1976 and was taking about 2 to 3 years to unfold. And we realized that we were having people occupying positions that were not being productive for us in the system and were not accomplishing the training that we had hoped they would accomplish. So at the present time we are estimating a cost avoidance of somewhere between $12 and $15 million a year,

by moving that initial training screening decision down to the academy within the first upward of 15 weeks of training.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Mr. Demps, I would like to ask you; witnesses for the professional association indicate that the academy requires personal motivation and enthusiasm as a critical job element with regard to appraisals of instructors' performances. However, they argue that the academy has stifled instructor innovation by rigidly structuring training presentations, leaving no latitude for changes. They cite an example of a situation involving a Mr. John Edwards where he was, according to their testimony, verbally reprimanded and threatened with a low performance rating for bootlegging training material.

What is your response to the allegation that instructors are, on the one hand, encouraged to be innovative and on the other, discouraged from such efforts to motivate students?

Mr. DEMPS. Madam Chairman, the instructor cadre and the supervisor cadre at the academy in the instructional areas have what we call a standardization committee that is composed of those people who do the instruction in the classroom. It is that committee's task to receive the ideas and suggestions with regard to innovations in the administration and presentation of the training, to determine whether or not it should be universally adopted within the training plan.

The necessity for standardization rises out of the fact that we must have a valid course presented to the students. Typically on an input we may have five or six separate class groups proceeding through the training in that same input. In order to successfully and validly screen out from employment those people who do not meet the requirements, it is absolutely necessary to have standardized presentation. But there is a way for those who do have innovative and acceptable ideas to have those things made known, and a group of people assigned to those committees study them, look at them, and if we can adopt them and still maintain our standards, we do so.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Who makes that decision? You say there's a group of administrators of the academy?

Mr. DEMPS. The committee consists of instructors and supervisors, and they discuss those innovative changes with what we call our instruction resources group who are the educational specialists in the academy. They determine whether or not those suggestions can be adopted without detriment to our standardized presentation of the course, and of course the purpose of standardization, as I said, was to insure the validity of the instruments that we're going to use to test. So there is a way for them to do that, to make those suggestions, and to have management review the applicability to the course.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Mr. Helms, I'd like to go back for a minute to a longstanding complaint, at least that I've heard since I have been here in the Congress, and that is the labor-management problems at FAA. This has been certainly one of the complaints that the controllers have mentioned. The Department of Transportation has a special panel that was convened to study, I believe, the labor-management and personnel problems, and I believe they are sched-

uled to make their report relatively soon. Do you know what the status of that report is?

Mr. HELMS. Yes, Madam Chairman. We do not have formal meetings with that group because we prefer to let them go completely alone. At the time of my initial hearings for confirmation and subsequent, I noted that the management relations within the FAA were less than I had seen in most any industrial firm with which I'd been associated, and this was a major undertaking. Not only that, but we noted it in our efforts between our negotiating team and the former bargaining unit, a recognition of this, and asked for time to try to work these things out.

This labor relations team is scheduled to complete their work about February 1. We expect their report about the end of February. Even though it's taking slightly longer than we had anticipated, we are not as interested in the schedule as we were the completeness, so we did have one meeting with them when they told us that they were going to run overtime, and the Secretary and I agreed without any hesitancy, we're going to have you do it right. So we would expect a report about the last of February.

Senator KASSEBAUM. These are independent labor relations experts, I believe, who are doing this.

Mr. HELMS. Yes, ma'am. Not only that, but we encourage them to bring aboard an outside organization to help them do field summaries, field surveys, prepare questionnaires. And that's their choice. They chose McKenzie & Co. We have no direct relationship. We have left them completely alone. We have assigned a staff man to make sure they get everything they need from the FAA in the way of entrance, location, travel, et cetera.

Senator KASSEBAUM. I have several questions that Senator Packwood wanted me to ask. These are not directly related to the training, which was the intent that my questions had at these hearings. But he was particularly anxious that I bring these out.

He would like to ask you, Mr. Helms, regarding the FAA's handling of slot allocations necessitated by the reduced controller force, in permitting tower-to-tower operations from Washington National to Philadelphia, does the FAA anticipate being able to allow tower-to-tower operations between other major airports? If so, when?

Mr. HELMS. We not only anticipate it, Madam Chairman, we are formally planning on it. One of the things which we have wanted to do and we are constantly underway on is how do we more efficiently use this cubic volume of air? As an example, by going tower-to-tower clearances—and now we are operating at below 7,000 feet—this would say, then, that we could eliminate the demand on the center and have this handled by tower to tower. The reason is that we can train people and have a greater capacity to bring military people into control towers. Then they can go into the center.

But I have been absolutely adamant that I will not allow anything to be initiated that we have not clearly demonstrated does not impact safety. So we have been running a series of trials. We first started out in September. We have continually expanded it to see what we can do for tower-to-tower clearances. Rather than

detail what we have done, I will tell you where we are and where I expect to be shortly.

This week, we expect to release a vastly expanded tower-to-tower clearance program which will raise the ceiling to 10,000 feet, and, in fact, will allow a pilot to go from Milwaukee down past Columbus, Ohio. He can probably go from Boston to Washington. We will be expanding it out into the Kansas City area, the Los Angeles area, and Dallas-Fort Worth.

By doing this, then, it allows more general aviation flights by keeping them out of the center, and thus makes more of a center capacity available to the scheduled air carriers. So we will be moving rapidly into this, and it will get underway, I think, this week.

Senator KASSEBAUM. That will be good news, I'm sure, to many in the general aviation industry.

Mr. HELMS. I think that coupled with our act of last Friday which created one new slot per hour for each flight service station for sole use by air taxi and air charter, which would give them some 350 additional flights a day, is the next major step to help them have the flexibility they wanted.

You recall earlier I said capability is both capacity and timeliness, being able to move when you want to. These two steps would allow the general aviation pilot considerably more flexibility and free up the slots out of the center and TRACON so the scheduled air carriers will have more capability.

It is our plan to stay as we are through February, and as our controller work force grows—which it is—in February we will go back to the air traffic system, and we will go to the air carrier industry and we will let them take a look at it, then, and give them new targets for April and June and July. We expect to start a steady increase starting in February.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Do you feel that weather could perhaps cause you to reevaluate or watch this closely at this particular time?

Mr. HELMS. No one ordinarily in the citizenry likes bad weather, certainly not snow. But from our viewpoint, the last 3 days have been a real blessing. Specifically, except for a narrow band through Florida, the entire east coast and east of the Mississippi has been under a major cloud deck, with rains—3 days of either rains, showers, or snow. This allows us to measure our capability to handle traffic at specific airports and centers during a bad weather period.

The number of delays is essentially unchanged from what it was before this period, so from our viewpoint, it confirms all that we have been doing to be able to take care of bad weather. Frankly, I feel much more comfortable about it now, and I particularly note this because it did not require putting people on vastly extended work weeks. We didn't have to have people go back to 50 to a 55-, 60-hour work week.

The last few days has helped us to confirm that our plan to handle winter weather is very valid, so therefore I am quite confident that in February we will have additional capacity, primarily because of the increased controllers and the fact that we will then have had all our work force have at least 5 days off on either Thanksgiving, Christmas, or New Year's.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Senator Packwood also wanted me to ask if the FAA has determined the optimum operating levels of the various TRACON's.

Mr. HELMS. Not specifically. And the reason is we have three levels of control for a given location. For example, New York, we have La Guardia tower capability, J. F. K. tower capability, Newark tower capability. The next level is the terminal control area or TRACON. The next level is center. Each of these were hit by varying degrees of absence, so we have been in the process of shifting people around and balancing it to make sure that we respond to the major portion of the traffic coverage, so we can tell you what a specific TRACON can handle. We can go in and take a look at that, but it's what that TRACON can hand off to the tower or receive from the center that is the limiting factor.

Let me put this in a real world perspective. Today we have more runway capacity at La Guardia, J. F. K., and Newark than we need. But we cannot get them to the TRACON and the center. Conversely, in Atlanta and Washington we have more capacity on the runway than we have in the center, but in Atlanta we have more capacity in the center than we have in the tower and the runway. So we are in the process of balancing these off.

If there is a particular one, yes, we can identify what it is. We are trying to balance it out in all cases, however.

Senator KASSEBAUM. And this is something you'll make public to the air carriers as soon as you are able to formulate it, I'll assume?

Mr. HELMS. I suspect the intent of Senator Packwood's question is how does the carrier know when these thoughts become available.

First, our process is open to anyone. We have never had any hesitance on that. Each of the carriers are invited to send their representatives and meet with us, and we go through the entire process with them, so they understand. In fact, each of them are allowed on a monthly basis to make applications for the next month, in case we get an increase.

As an example, perhaps we had been able to handle, traditionally, 46 slots an hour at Dallas-Fort Worth. Next month we are going to be able to handle 48. We tell them in advance. They make their application, and we go on from there. So they know about it, and they are quite welcome, any time.

Incidentally, there are two areas in which we do not have control. The essential service requirements for smaller communities is a function of CAB. Therefore, before we can make that kind of judgment, CAB has to assign it. Second, we are not allowed to make any kind of decision which would eliminate service to an area. Only the CAB does this.

We meet with the CAB every week, sometimes twice a week, to make sure that what we're doing is parallel with their thinking.

Senator KASSEBAUM. When slots are opened up, then, is this a competitive option, then, for the airlines? Who determines who is going to get additional slots as they are opened?

Mr. HELMS. First come, first served. The list is opened up every month over again. Whoever asks for it first in the month goes on the list; he gets it first.

Senator KASSEBAUM. And that's by the month?

Mr. HELMS. Yes, ma'am.

Senator KASSEBAUM. There are requests coming in by the month?

Mr. HELMS. That's right. We couldn't keep a list ongoing month after month after month. It would get too confused, because their schedules change seasonally. So every month we start new lists. Whoever asks for it first, if he is on the list first, he gets it.

Senator KASSEBAUM. This is another question of Senator Packwood:

With respect to the air traffic control system, I have no doubt that there has been considerable burden placed on FAA officials charged with the responsibility of cutting back operations at airports throughout the country without appearing to be arbitrary or unfair; however, this is a form of regulation and has financial bearing on a carrier. There is concern that the decisionmaking process be conducted in the open and with as much information being available as possible.

Has the FAA given consideration to establishing some sort of quasi-judicial process whereby decisions on air traffic control flow plans would be made?

Mr. HELMS. First, there are very few people that are more anti-regulatory than me, so I do not enjoy participating in any form of regulation. And I think I will probably wear the biggest black hat in town for at least 2 years, but I am interested in the safety of the system. As regards allocation, we are talking in terms of some 70,000 movements a day through the system, large books which lay out city by city. To try to do this in a public forum of considering—I don't quite know how we would do it.

Therefore, what we have done is told individual carriers, "Come on in. Bring your scheduling people in. Let us show you what we do and how. Maybe you have got some suggestions to improve it," and anytime there's a change, we do that.

We find that it is actually much more beneficial, because the industrial mideast was very hard hit. Some carriers are impacted by that, whereas carriers on the west coast were essentially untouched. We should then make this available to our capabilities in each of these areas. That's the reason we have the individual carriers—we give them all the access, 24 hours a day. I don't quite know how we would do this in an open hearing. I am not opposed to it. I just don't know how we would mechanize it. These very large books, considering 70,000 air operations a day, of which the air carriers operate in the area of, say, 24,000, I don't know how we would adjust these and move them around.

My suggestions—and thus far as far as I know they have been quite willing to come on in on their own—we welcome their scheduling people at any time, at any meeting we have.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Thank you very much, Mr. Helms and the other members of the panel.

I would like to say again that I think you and the FAA administrators and the controllers who have been working long and difficult hours have really done a real service to our air transportation system in this country through a very critical time.

Mr. HELMS. We appreciate your remarks, Madam Chairman, and welcome the opportunity to respond to the committee at any time.

[The statement follows:]

STATEMENT OF J. LYNN HELMS, ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Madam Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I welcome the opportunity to appear before you to describe the FAA's air traffic control training and testing program. With me today to assist me in answering your questions are Don Rock, Director of Personnel and Training, and Ben Demps, Director of the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center.

As a result of the loss of about 11,400 controllers due to the PATCO strike, the FAA has undertaken the tremendous task of rebuilding the Nation's air traffic control system. An essential part of this rebuilding is the selection and training of new recruits to replace controllers who were terminated.

Our examination of the system has indicated that prior to the strike we had too many controllers. Thus, we do not intend to raise the number of controllers back to the pre-strike level. Our best estimate is that we need to add 8,000 controllers in the next 2 to 3 years to get the system back to prestrike capacity.

Some people have questioned whether we can train so many new controllers without cutting corners, without compromising safety. Let me state unequivocally that we will not cut corners in training new controllers. We will not compromise safety. We will maintain our stringent standards for hiring and training controllers.

Prior to the strike our training program had been operating at a minimal level. We were, after all, in the midst of a hiring freeze. When it became apparent that we would have to train thousands of new controllers over the course of 2 to 3 years, we examined our capabilities at both the FAA Academy in the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center and our field facilities. One way to bolster our training capacity was to augment our instructor workforce at the Academy with retired controllers and instructors provided under contract by Oklahoma University. We have taken that step and we can provide training for students entering the Academy at the rate of about 500 per month. Increasing this number would not be productive at this time, because additional trainees could not be absorbed by the field facilities, where the bulk of the developmental controllers' training is accomplished.

Field training is performed by working controllers and instructor staffs. We are in the process of hiring retired controllers to supplement the instructor staffs in field facilities, and this is an integral part of the Air Traffic Control Revitalization Act of 1981 which we have previously submitted to the Congress. Furthermore, we are bolstering the staffing of our facilities with people who have aviation experience such as ex-military controllers and furloughed pilots, who, with a minimal amount of training, will be able to perform non-control functions. This frees more experienced developmentals to perform higher level control functions and full performance level controllers are then freed up to conduct on-the-job training, and classroom and simulation training.

Now, having established the FAA's ability to train new controllers, the question becomes, where do we get 8,000 new recruits to train? As you may be aware, in the days after the strike, 125,000 people registered to take the competitive civil service exam for air traffic controllers. When the exam was given, about 50,000 actually showed up to take it. It is anticipated that about 25,000 of these will pass the test and become eligible for selection for training. This applicant pool is sufficiently large to provide us with high quality candidates for at least a year. After that we may want to re-open the register by giving the exam again or we may find that there are still enough high-calibre applicants to fill our needs.

At this point, perhaps, it would be useful for me to say a few words about the exam these applicants have taken. This fall, we replaced the old exam with a new battery of tests composed of 3 parts:

1. A multiple controller aptitude test.—Designed to measure the skills of applicants within a simulated air traffic control setting;

2. An abstract reasoning section.—Taken from the old test. This measures a person's ability to deal with relations among sets of figures and letters—a skill required in the controller job; and

3. An occupational knowledge test.—An 80 item multiple choice test that is "job-knowledge specific." It is not a pass/fail test intended to determine applicant eligibility, but rather a means of measuring air traffic control knowledge and experience. It is used as a basis for granting extra points to those who do pass the test battery.

We believe that the new aptitude test will improve our ability to screen applicants. It was developed by FAA and the Office of Personnel Management over a number of years, and we have empirically tested it by giving it to trainees who had passed the old test. It was found that the new test produced significantly fewer high test scores (i.e., scores of 90 and above). Furthermore, those who did score highly on

the new test had a higher rate of success in completing the air traffic control training than those who scored similarly well on the old test. Thus, we believe that the combination of our new battery of aptitude tests and our increased applicant pool will allow us to better select candidates who will be able to successfully complete our training course. In fact, we expect that it will increase our training success rate by 5 to 10 percent.

Having said that, I should explain the widespread reports that the first class to complete training at the FAA Academy since the strike had a very low pass rate. Incidentally, the FAA implemented the requirement in 1976 that trainees pass an exam at the end of Academy instruction before proceeding to field training, in an effort to screen our unqualified trainees early in the training process. While it is true that the first en route class, which started on August 11, had a high failure rate—50 percent failed; 16.7 percent withdrew; and 33.3 percent passed, there have been other pre-strike classes with higher failure rates, or lower pass rates.

I believe there are several reasons for the performance of the first post-strike class. First, 57 of the 72 had no prior air traffic control experience. Historically, students in this category have had a lower pass rate than those with prior military ATC experience. Second, 24 of the students were not screened through the competitive OPM register process, but were selected under special non-competitive programs. Finally, those who did come in through the competitive process had taken the old aptitude test. While we normally prefer to take applicants who test out in the high 80's or 90's, in some regions the only applicants left on the registers were those who had scored in the 70's. With a new register out and with a vastly increased applicant pool formed by candidates who have taken the new test, we expect to gradually reach and then exceed the normal academy pass rate of 70 percent.

I would also note that, while we, of course, would have preferred a higher pass rate from the first post-strike classes, the fact is we did not relax our strict standards and allow unqualified people to progress to field training. We have not lowered our training standards and we will not do so. While we have made a few adjustments in our training program, nothing has been dropped. I would like to describe our training program now, and then explain the few changes we have made.

There are two basic options in which we train controllers at our Academy: En route and terminal. For the trainee in the en route option, training at the Academy includes 2 days of Orientation/Indoctrination, 16 days on the Fundamentals of the Air Traffic Control System, and 40 days on Non-Radar Air Traffic Control. Trainees for the terminal option receive an added 15-day course of instruction on Control Tower Operation after the Fundamentals course. One change we made in order to reduce the workload on field facilities was to move the Indoctrination/Orientation phase from the facilities to the Academy. This general background presentation on how the FAA operates, personnel policies, and the like, can be taught anywhere.

Our previous training program called for Radar Training at the Academy immediately following Non-Radar Training. Trainees were then sent to field facilities for further instruction and on-the-job training. This meant that all developmental controllers received radar training, whether or not they were assigned to radar facilities. In some cases, even among those assigned to radar facilities, Academy radar training came as much as 2 years prior to the radar qualification training in the field. Therefore, we have re-sequenced Academy Radar training to occur just prior to field radar training. As a result, only those who need radar training will receive it, and it will be provided at a time that will be most meaningful in the training program.

It is the field training that really teaches a developmental how to control air traffic. This phase of training is a mixture of classroom instruction, lab, simulation, and on-the-job training, and it ordinarily takes from 2 to 5 years to become a full performance level controller, depending upon the level of the facility the controller is assigned to. In an effort to expedite the rebuilding process, FAA has negotiated an agreement with OPM to reduce time-in-grade requirements for promotions. This agreement will be in effect until 75 percent of the workforce reaches full performance level. Under its terms, developmental controllers can progress based on their qualifications to perform controller duties rather than being forced to wait for a full year before being able to train in positions at a higher grade level. I must emphasize that no qualification requirements are being eliminated or reduced. The only requirements being waived are time-in-grade requirements which are personnel rules promulgated by OPM. Trainees must still be qualified and certified for the next grade according to strict FAA rules in order to be eligible for promotion. This is expected to accelerate the promotion of developmentals to full performance level controllers by about 1 year on the average.

I want to emphasize again, Madam Chairman, that we have not taken nor will we take any steps to cut corners or place unqualified people into jobs they can't handle just to build up our workforce. We have taken a reasoned and prudent course, based on careful evaluation of our ability to train new controllers without compromising system safety. We believe that our projections for rebuilding the system are sound. I can assure you I am firmly committed to making sure that the system operates safely during this interim period and that our controllers receive the proper training necessary to make them fully capable controllers who will protect the integrity of the system in the long term. We have a remarkable safety record in aviation in this country, and I intend to see that we maintain it and improve it.

That concludes my prepared statement, Madam Chairman. My colleagues and I would be pleased to respond to your questions at this time.

[The following information was subsequently received for the record:]

QUESTIONS OF SENATOR EXON AND THE ANSWERS THERETO

Question. You testified on October 6 that "We expect to be able to enter about 6,000 controllers for training at our Academy within a year. By the end of 1982, we project that nearly 5,000 controllers will have graduated from the Academy." These figures indicate a projected 83% completion rate. It was reported that the first class to enter the Academy after the August 3 strike had 24 of 72 pass. This represents a completion rate of only 33%. Do you believe your projected completion rate may have been overly optimistic?

Answer. We do not believe that the unusually low completion rate for the first post-strike class is indicative of the average completion rate that we will experience during the strike recovery period. There have been instances of similar low completion rates for isolated classes in the past. However, our average completion rate since 1976 has been much higher. We anticipate that about 4,500 controllers will graduate from the Academy by the end of 1982. The projection is based on the use of the new Air Traffic Control screening exam which has been administered to applicants since October 15, 1981. This new test should provide more highly qualified candidates to the Academy and, as a result, we estimate that the average success rate which we have experienced since 1976 will improve by 5 to 10%.

Question. You testified on October 6 in reference to a training agreement, which was approved by OMB, that allows trainees to advance when qualified and operationally certified. You stated, "This will enable us to achieve greater productivity from individuals who demonstrate the capability to progress more rapidly through training and will rebuild our operating capabilities quicker." If this policy allows greater productivity and reduced training time, why hasn't this policy been instituted before now? Has this policy had previous controller support? Did the FAA refuse to support this policy prior to the August 3 strike?

Answer. Since January 1978, FAA has made several proposals to the Office of Personnel Management to reduce time-in-grade requirements for air traffic controllers. Each request was disapproved. These requests were fully supported by all concerned offices in FAA.

Question. Mr. Demps, Director of your Academy, said that a third post-strike class had only a 19% failure rate. He also said that these students were involved in a slightly less-demanding branch of air traffic control training. Does this mean that training requirements have been reduced and that the students have not completed Academy training?

Answer. The third post-strike class consisted of students who are assigned to Terminal facilities while the first two classes consisted of En Route students. Over the years, the failure rate in Terminal training has been 5%–10% lower than in the En Route training program. Therefore, this lower failure rate is not unusual. Training requirements for both En Route and Terminal classes are the same as they were before the strike.

Question. Aside from the cost of rebuilding the air traffic control system, what is the real cost to the economy in dollars lost by the airlines, layoff of industry associated jobs, and lost tax revenues?

Answer. Based upon the information available to the FAA, it is our opinion that the economic recession has had a significantly greater impact on aviation-related activity than the strike and the subsequent constraints on the system. With fewer flights than last year, available seat miles flown are at or above prestrike levels in most major markets. Load factors, on the other hand, are down from a year ago. Vacation markets such as Florida have more seats being flown than last year, and

are charging highly discounted fares, yet fewer passengers are flying. This can only be attributed to the state of the economy.

The demand for aviation products is for the most part a derived demand and not an end unto itself. Aviation is a factor of production or, alternatively, a means of achieving some level of consumer satisfaction by making activities such as vacations possible with short travel times. When the demand for products or leisure time activities falls, the demand for aviation will fall. This trend had started as far back as October 1980, when aviation activity started to decline some 10 months before the strike. This trend has continued and will not reverse until the overall economic activity of this country recovers.

Question. Has the radar simulator training been eliminated from the Academy curriculum? If so, do you intend to reinstate this training device?

Answer. We plan to continue providing radar simulator training at the Academy. However, it has been resequenced to occur just prior to students entering field radar training. This resequencing is designed to provide radar skills to students at an appropriate point in their training program rather than 2-3 years ahead of time as was the case prior to resequencing. It also eliminates the need to provide radar training to students who are assigned to non-radar facilities.

Question. Are any of the new hirees being trained anywhere other than the Academy in Oklahoma City? Are any of the training requirements being relaxed for controllers now being hired?

Answer. The normal entry grade level for new controller hires is GS-7. All controllers hired at the GS-7 level attend the Academy training program. Academy training requirements have not been changed.

We have also hired some controllers who, because of their previous experience, qualified at the GS-9 level. Those controllers hired at the GS-9 level were placed directly into field facility training programs. These students must successfully complete facility pass/fail training, with the same training and certification requirements that apply to GS-7's who graduate from the Academy.

Question. What is the average cost per controller for training until the controller reaches full performance level?

Answer. Our estimate of an average cost to train an air traffic controller to the full performance level is $160,000. It should be understood that this cost is incurred over a 3-4 year period (depending upon the type of facility to which the development controller is assigned) and includes the controller's salary—including the cost of time spent on productive job-related duties as well as formal training time—training travel and per diem while in initial resident training at the FAA Academy, follow-on field facility instruction costs, and "backfill" costs, i.e., the indirect costs associated with hiring and training new recruits to replace those trainees who fail or withdraw from the program.

Question. The FAA has been accused of manipulating test scores at the academy in order to improve the completion rate and to validate the estimated rebuilding timetable. Is there any truth to these charges and are there discrepancies being found in the grading system?

Answer. The originally reported pass/fail statistics for the air traffic en route students that completed the manual training phase on November 19, 1981, were found to be in error. Following the discovery of the error in the statistics reported, the Academy was directed to conduct an in-depth review to insure the accuracy of the previously reported data. The more in-depth review, which was conducted the very next morning, confirmed the fact that the original statistics were definitely wrong in that there were 17 failures that were inadvertently left out in the original figures reported, but moreover, the detailed check discovered additional errors in grading involving seven different students. Specifically, the in-depth review on Friday, November 20, revealed that seven students, formerly identified as having failed, had actually passed. In addition, some apparent discrepancies were identified in the composite grade of another seven students. Following the initial detailed check by the Academy, a second independent analytical review was called for by the Center Director. This review was conducted by two research psychologists in the Civil Aeromedical Institute (CAMI), which is independent of the Academy. This in-depth, intensified review, which consisted of several crosschecks with optical scanner equipment, visual verification, review of the Academy's regrading of laboratory tapes, etc., took several days, and it verified that seven of the original group who had been previously identified by the Academy's review as failures, had actually passed, thus confirming the Academy's initial findings.

In addition, this more intensified review revealed 12 additional scoring errors, three involving students who had previously been identified as passing that actually failed and nine other errors that did not affect the students' pass/fail status.

As a result of the problems encountered, the Aeronautical Center has initiated an interim grading system which will include crosschecks, i.e., hand grading crosschecked with optical scanner grading to preclude the repetition of the same problem. In addition, the Director, Aeronautical Center, has instructed his staff to develop a completely revised system of grading that must include, but not be limited to, the use of multiple scanners for crosschecking, hand grading, versus crosschecks with scanners.

The in-depth investigation into this situation concluded the following:

That there were 19 grade changes for good and sufficient reasons.

The investigation also concluded there was no manipulation of scores with the intent to increase the number of people passing.

Question. In a GAO report published July 9, 1981, regarding controller staffing and training, it stated, ". . . Most controllers reach full performance level in 4 to 5 years." The present staffing shortage, coupled with the greater number of trainees, certainly means a shortage of instructors. Does this mean that training at the facility will take longer? How do you intend to provide the essential training with a shortage of people? How much longer will it take to train the developmentals?

Answer. We plan to supplement our presently available field training staffs by contracting for the services of approximately 180 retired controllers. These contract instructors will enable us to provide all required training on a timely basis at our field facilities. As a result of this initiative, we anticipate no unusual delays in training or in the subsequent position check-out and certification activities for our development controllers.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Thank you.

It's a pleasure to welcome you here, Mr. John Edwards, vice president of air traffic, Professional Association of Aeronautical Center Employees, accompanied by Paula Voyles, special adviser and chief legal counsel.

I also would like to state that I would like to enter in the record the testimony of Earl B. Hobbs, Jr.

[The statement follows:]

STATEMENT OF EARL B. HOBBS, JR

My name is Earl B. Hobbs, Jr., I have been employed by the Federal Aviation Administration as an Air Traffic Control Specialist for more than ten years, and I have completed three years as an instructor in the Air Traffic Branch of the FAA Academy. I am privileged to serve my fellow academy employees as the Academy Vice-President for PAACE, the Professional Association of Aeronautical Center Employees.

Allow me to publicly add my name to the growing ranks of individuals and organizations that support the goals and objectives of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Association. Make no mistake. There are thousands of honorable and able ex-employees filling the unemployment lines when they would willingly be of service to the air traffic system and their nation. The controllers that did strike the FAA did so only with the most noble motives—concern for their families, frantternity, and loyalty to a worthy cause. The true spirit of American Unionism is free in men such as these.

On more than one occassion, I have air traffic instructors at the academy tell me that were it not for their present position, they too would have been among those fired by President Reagan.

It goes without doubt that the might of the law was on the side of the President. It is further without doubt that in breaking the law the strikers were liable to the full extent of the law. But, this nation was, in part, founded on the concept of reasonable redress of grievance. Collective bargaining is the right all labor organizations must use to win justice for the workers. In using the strike, PATCO was resorting to the last and final tool which allows redress and justice.

I have served on a team which has tried to bargain in good faith with the FAA. It is my belief that it is not the intent of FAA management to sit with a union panel and bargain in good faith. I have seen at first hand the delaying tactics, and the issues management will use to avoid negotiation and substance. It is not difficult for me to understand the position of the PATCO negotiators when they realized the FAA had no intent to reach accord. It must be remembered that any federal employee union is limited by law, and can therefore only come to the bargaining table as "collective beggars".

The Union (PATCO) was wrong. President Reagan was wrong. It is time reason and justice should prevail, and that these good men be put to work.

There is a large and continuing turnover in the air traffic instructor staff at the FAA academy. From time to time, I will receive requests from field personnel concerning working conditions and positions at the academy. It is my policy to discourage those who wish to apply for positions as instructors. There are numerous reasons I do not recommend the academy, and among these are poor supervision and management, loss of pay, family disruption, moving expense compensation, loss of bidding points. I would like to take an opportunity to discuss each of these points in turn.

The FAA has long offered correspondence courses which are supposedly designed to help an applicant desiring advancement and career progression. One of the things that made an indelible impression on me, was that the FAA insists on "management by objective". I have understood this to mean that employees and supervisors should work together to attain goals, and that the job of management is to help employees through incentive, reward, constructive discipline and encouragement. While I have had some very find managers and supervisors at field facilities, I can state absolutely that I have never seen any of the desirable management tools used at the academy, except as a gross parady—a travesty, if you will.

Allow me to cite an example of this poor management technique. During each phase of training for each air traffic class, a "lead" instructor is assigned. This instructor is responsible for the direct supervision of the students in the class, the scheduling of laboratories, tests, and instructor assignments, and counseling activities. Obviously, this is a position which requires some skill and judgement. Individuals selected as lead instructors are given preferential bidding points when jobs as unit chiefs are opened. Certainly it is desirable to have responsible people as leads—it is desirable to have responsible people as unit chief. But, FAA management steadfastly refuses to publish any criteria or standard under which lead instructors are selected. It is impossible for any instructor to expressly work toward the position, because he has no standard to work from. I change that it is the policy of academy management to use the lead instructor system as a "reward" system for perceived "good instructors"—and that in turn, truly qualified individuals who are not so popular are denied career progression opportunity. I also charge that the lead system is not uniformly administered throughout the various air traffic sections—and is therefore uequal on its face.

Upper level academy management has from time to time tried to usurp the responsibility of the mediate or "first line" supervisor, and I will cite an example. Instructors are required to have mastery of the course material in which they instruct. They are, additionally, required to meet a standard developed by the academy in the performance of those instructional duties. The first line supervisor is responsible for the performance evaluation of the instructor. It has been proposed by management to remove the responsibility for this evaluation from the supervisor, and delegate this authority to an office manned by "educational specialists" who would make one cursory examination of the instructor per year, or at best each 6 months. The effect would be to place the career of the instructor in the hands of a disinterested party, who has no knowledge of the multifaceted capability of the instructor.

It is my opinion that without the strong objection of the PAACE, and other interested parties, this propoal would have been adopted.

I would like to cite one more example.

During the time the PAACE was in contract negotiations with the Aeronautical Center management, a proposal was made by the union to this effect; that, on the death or physical incapacitation of an instructor, the FAA would assume the expense of moving the instructor and his family back to his previous home or duty station—or pay equivalent moving expense if the employee desired to move to another location. The rationale for this proposal was simple. Instructors know when they move to the academy that they are only here on temporary assignments, and that at some time in the future they will be required to move. There is tremendous expense in accepting temporary assignment. It is not unreasonable for the Government to accept the expense for an employee on death or incapacity. When the matter was presented at the negotiation table, the response by management was almost unbelievable. The FAA's chief negotiator's word still ring in my mind. "The FAA cannot consider this proposal, as it is an infringement on management's rights. The agency has no responsibility to an employee who finds himself in such circumstance—it is the responsibility of the employee to make adequate provision for himself and his family." I tell you I was staggered to think that so little concern

could be expressed by a management official, when the Government pretends such concern for welfare cheaters each year.

What I am talking about is respect. I do not believe that academy management has the intent to treat the air traffic instructor staff with the respect or basic human consideration they deserve. There is no cooperative spirit of accommodation—no feeling that "we" are working toward a common goal. I do believe that upper level management at the academy looks on the instructors staff as an adversary force to be overcome and conquered. It can be little wonder that instructors look with a jaundiced eye at their supervision, when there is never any encouragement from management.

I do not know of any air traffic instructor who is starving to death. Salaries range from the GS–11 range to the GS–13 range. It is difficult, however, for enroute and terminal instructors to understand how their counterparts in field facilities can be recommended for salary and benefit increases, when academy management has refused to request the same increases for them. When FAA Administrator Lynn Helms issued GENOT 1/207, he could not have insulted and humiliated air traffic instructors more if he had personally slapped them in the face. Instructors have been told that they are the backbone of the agency, and that they are the force that will rebuild the agency after the strike. With FLSA regulations keeping instructors from receiving true time-and-a-half, and double-dippers re-hiring into the agency for much greater pay, and leave curtailed, and limited career potential increasingly evident, how can the instructor force be expected to maintain morale?

Consider the purchase of housing. If a field employee accepts a move to the academy, he must sell his old house, move, and purchase a new house. The agency will pay a portion of the expenses involved, but it is never possible to recover the real costs associated with a move. Children's lives and schooling is disrupted. Family living and social activities are curtailed.

Consider more closely the costs of selling and buying a home. Across the United States, the real estate market is glutted with houses. Interest rates are high, and show no real tendency to come down. In the Oklahoma City area, the housing market is strong due to the oil "boom" being experienced in the area. if the instructor is able to find a buyer for his old home, and if mortgage money can be arranged, he may be able to find housing in Oklahoma City, at a higher cost and a higher mortgage rate than his previous home. And, add to that the limited help he will receive from the FAA in covering his expenses—sums which today are almost laughable in light of the attitudes taken by private industry.

It is time to make some concrete proposals that will aid the FAA in the recovery of the air traffic system. I believe the following actions should be taken to give the academy the strength and vitality to aid that recovery.

1. Allow those instructors who have demonstrated ability and desire to do so, remain at the academy as instructors in their series and grade with full potential for promotion and reward.

2. End this ridiculous farce of hiring unskilled and unqualified retirees to fill vancancies within the academy. This would slow the recovery process, but would insure there are qualified instructors on the job.

3. Authorize and pay full time-and-a-half overtime, regardless the pay ceilings currently allowable.

4. Grant all instructors supervisory status within the agency, at the highest first line supervisory grade applicable within the individual option.

5. Insure that instructors are granted equal career opportunity, while at the academy, and on return to the field. Abolish the imposed lead instructor system, and rotate instructors through the positions to develop career potential.

6. Insure that the spirit of management by objective and goal is attained. Make the employees feel they are a part of a team, and not slaves to be exploited for the benefit of the managers.

7. Deal with employee labor organizations in a way that will reflect credit on the agency. Treat employees with compassion and respect.

It is my opinion that unless something is done to arrest the deteriorating situation at the academy before long, the efficiency of the academy will be so affected that the quantity and quality of students will not be able to meet the needs of the recovery program.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Mr. Edwards?

Mr. EDWARDS. Ms. Voyles will present our testimony, and then we will be available for questions.

STATEMENT OF JOHN EDWARDS, VICE PRESIDENT, AIR TRAFFIC, PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AERONAUTICAL CENTER EMPLOYEES, ACCOMPANIED BY PAULA VOYLES, SPECIAL ADVISER AND CHIEF LEGAL COUNSEL

Ms. VOYLES. Madam Chairman, we appreciate this opportunity to speak for the academy employees. We hope this summary testimony will shed some light on the current investigation as well as show that academy instructors are among the most dedicated of Government employees, and if we accomplish nothing else today, we hope to leave you with a better perspective of that.

Present economic conditions dictate that by far the majority of individuals accepting an academy assignment must assume a much larger home mortgage payment and often encounter long delays in the sale of their old residence. There is more to instructor morale than just simply this legislation that was spoken of.

In addition, it is not uncommon for the air traffic controllers to voluntarily downgrade when leaving the field for an academy instructor assignment. The actual downgrade may not cost them money, but the loss of night differential premium and holiday pay, et cetera, does cost them money. It is felt that straight day hours with weekends off and time to spend with their families offsets this loss in pay. That's one of the benefits gained by coming to the academy. That's one of the things that does give them something to look forward to as a benefit that they didn't have when they were rotating shifts.

Coming to the academy as a rule guarantees that they are going to work 8 to 5. The instructing air traffic controller anticipates promotion opportunity back to the geographical area they left and so feel they can afford to lose money on a short-term basis in order to gain career progression opportunities. It is not at all unusual for academy instructors to spend many hours of their personal time in preparation to teach a class. In all options at the academy, technology advances rapidly. And these people pride themselves on their ability to maintain technical currency.

The academy just naturally attracts field personnel that are hard-working, ambitious, and career progression oriented. These men and women are selected for academy positions because they have the technical knowledge necessary to effectively train others in a one-of-a-kind occupation. In order to play a part in the Agency's training mission, a new instructor must successfully complete academy classes dealing with professionalism, presentation technique, and human relations—before they ever enter the classrooms themselves. In effect, they take on a whole new occupation for which they have sacrificed much, only to discover that they are to be treated with total disrespect by the Agency, particularly in this crisis.

Unfortunately, you can actually see—and I have seen this over several years—you can actually see their enthusiasm diminishing after the first few months at the academy. This is more the fault of the Agency and the system than the actual academy structure. Unfortunately, there is no utopian solution we can offer to that. But the real slap in the face did come with the recent legislation in the proposal to increase benefits and provide premium pay for air traf-

fic and airway facilities field personnel. This same legislation specifically excludes FAA Academy personnel, and it does give some additional premium pay to air traffic controllers who were still in the field to conduct on-the-job field training. The academy instructors must now put forth their best effort to rebuild the air traffic control system, and must do so without recognition in any form.

One of the incentives that brought them to the academy was regular hours, and now they have been put back into a posture of shift work, but without any of the newly legislated benefits they could be receiving in the field. As these men and women give more and more of themselves in an effort to accomplish the Agency mission, morale continues to erode.

The academy requires personal motivation and enthusiasm as a critical job element, as you discussed a little earlier. The committee mentioned by Mr. Demps would have to include PAACE representatives. Our existing agreement requires specific committee meetings at any time that the academy is even considering changes affecting instructor performance standards. Public Law 95-454 requires that PAACE at least be consulted on changes affecting working conditions. PAACE has no knowledge of a functioning committee actively evaluating the effectiveness of training material.

Until the air traffic recovery program was activated, many instructors bootlegged study materials to their students. Instructors who provided their students with study aids for self-help outside the classroom felt such materials got many students through the course that would otherwise have failed. Since the air traffic recovery program began, instructors have collectively ceased the practice of giving any student extra materials. They could be accused of malicious compliance, I suppose, but we felt this decision was the result of anticipated high visibility and a determination not to be found in violation of any policy when problems in the recovery program did occur. It is entirely possible that this action or lack of it had direct bearing on the high failure rate. In other words, they have worked so hard in the past to make sure this system worked—I am sure we are going to see that occur in many areas, not just the academy.

A number of things have affected morale. Number one, the air traffic instructor's counterpart in the field is receiving praise and monetary reward for staying on the job during the recent PATCO strike. PAACE is, or was—I'm not sure how we should look at it—a PATCO affiliate, and was in contract negotiations when PATCO walked. The instructors were therefore in an ideal position to walk out in support of PATCO. And, as we stated before, these people are among some of the most dedicated, and they deserve some recognition.

Two, they are granting students who are newly hired by the Agency into developmental positions their rights over and above—and even at the expense of—fully qualified professional employees.

Actually, the academy is steadily evolving into a screening organization instead of the professional training institution it was designed to be. The academy and the academy instructor must be guaranteed more authority and latitude in dealing with the student personnel problem. If the air traffic recovery program is to

succeed, the management philosophy also has to change from an emphasis on screening to one on training. Instead of rewarding instructors for showing initiative in the classroom and teaching to the best of their ability, they are chastized and threatened with reprimands or even worse in some cases.

If screening students is to be prime directive of the FAA Academy and training continues to take a backseat, then surely the air traffic recovery program will not accomplish its goal. Changes must be made to improve all FAA Academy instructor morale. Improvements to the 3–R program have been drafted. That's where they rotate back at 3, 2, and 2. Presently, it's 2, 2, and 2. One change would be the 3-year reversal. Approval of this draft would help reduce the large turnover in staffing and provide more continuity in the training program.

This change alone will not be sufficient to entice air traffic controllers, airway facility specialists, pilots and flight inspectors, et cetera, to remain at the academy or make the necessary sacrifices to come to the academy.

The academy instructors have demonstrated a genuine desire to support the Agency and to rebuild the air traffic system. The instructor work force and the FAA Academy must have legislative support and morale boosting recognition to enable them to be a genuinely effective team, and I think the word "team" is most important, that will bring the system back to its peak capacity.

Attracting future academy applicants is already a very real problem, and it's going to reach the critical stage quickly. After all, who's out there in the field to replace an air traffic instructor? The time to recognize the value of academy personnel is now. You have training resources that are being wasted. You have multitalented men and women who are fully qualified to rebuild our air traffic system. Take down some of the blockades and let them put their talents to effective use. Instigate changes to the merit promotion plan that give credit for time spent at the academy. In other words, don't leave them at the mercy of the individual regions who currently establish the bid points. Make sure they get the points they need and the points that will enable them to make progress toward making additional contributions to the Agency.

They came here for career progression, and they really need these aids. It's not what it used to be. The only way this can be accomplished is through changes in the merit promotion plan.

We recommend the academy be included in the recent legislation, particularly in the areas of premium night differential and a true time-and-a-half for all hours over 40, regardless of the existing ceilings on allowable yearly earnings. After all, they're not controlling live traffic, but they're putting in the additional hours. They're working on rotating shifts, and I really don't think true time-and-a-half for their time spent is asking a whole lot.

Expedite approval of changes to the 3–R program. Grant the instructors more latitude and authority in the classroom by converting them to some type of supervisory position or at least allow the credit in the merit promotion plan to reflect that so much of the experience in the classroom is of a supervisory nature and is of a guidance nature. They need something through the MPP that will give them the points that the region actually takes away from

them, by virtue of the fact that they've spent time at the Academy and don't have field recency/currency to get those points. It's more difficult.

Actively communicate Agency support and recognition. This item is particularly important in view of the recent scandal encompassing almost every Oklahoma county commissioner. This unfortunate event has created public distrust of Government and Government employees in general. Add this to the PATCO strike and the recent grading investigation, and you can surely see the need for support and recognition, at least from within the Agency.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Thank you very much.

Ms. VOYLES. Thank you for the opportunity. Mr. Edwards or I will be happy to answer any questions that we could.

Senator KASSEBAUM. I'd like to go back to a statement you made comparing the emphasis giving to screening versus training. It would seem to me that if there's going to be a really effective program, it has to combine both.

Ms. VOYLES. There should be screening before they ever arrive at the academy. We don't really see a problem with a continuation of the screening process. As a matter of fact, if we have 50 percent of our students fail, because in that first portion we see that they're not going to make it, then for heaven's sake, be kind to them. Hey, they can get a good job, but we don't want them up there controlling traffic. How are we ever going to rebuild the recovery program or rebuild the system through the recovery program, if we're washing out 50 percent of them?

Senator KASSEBAUM. I didn't get that from the testimony here this morning; did you? I think there is a belief that there needs to be an adequate screening process, so that there isn't going to be really wasted effort on the part of those who might hope to be controllers, and yet before they get too far along, they find they can't do it.

Ms. VOYLES. Right. That should be done to the best of their ability, before they reach the academy. Now when you actually put them in these situations, different people react differently. They have labs that are set up like they would be in a live traffic situation in the field. They actually have to begin to commit to memory many things. They have to be able to handle many situations at once. And when it comes time to commit all this to memory, and so forth, and be able to handle all of these, some of them do not do that well, and they wash out.

But there are many students who, if the instructor could give them personal guidance, say, "Look at Charlie over here, and if you had taken this particular area and learned it well, you'd be able to get through the rest of this course easily. This is where you're lagging."

And they cannot do that any longer. Everything is strictly structured. They must not deviate from the lesson plan. If they do go back over areas where there are questions, with the students, then they must involve the entire classroom for whatever length of time it takes to bring that one individual back to speed. In other words, they cannot take any personal interest in a particular student, because they can't have that student filing a grievance, because they believe in equal learning opportunity.

Senator KASSEBAUM. I think that it's obviously important to have an emphasis on good training, it would seem to me. I think that is what concerns us all. Obviously, there are times when there has to be, I would think, a personal interest in working with students, as in any classroom.

Ms. VOYLES. That cannot exist.

Senator KASSEBAUM. On the other hand, just how much specialized training there should be, in order to get someone along, I think has to be a question, when we have, obviously, a large number of applicants, and we should be concentrating assistance on those who are best qualified to do the work and move through the system.

Ms. VOYLES. Well, an instructor that would be willing to remain in the classroom a couple of minutes after a class, when a student has some extra questions, cannot do so. You cannot take that personal interest in that student. If he can't get it in the classroom, he cannot get it.

Mr. EDWARDS. I was going to say on this same subject, I think more of what we were alluding to was, the individual attention. Say a student were to come to you and ask, "Is there something else I can study? Is there something else you could suggest that I could get over this particular phase or hump in my program right here?" We are not permitted to give even a separate sheet of paper with anything written on it to any individual student. The reasoning behind this is a paranoia within the management at the academy that students will file grievances or file discrimination complaints, because "I failed, because this individual had more of an opportunity than I did." And this paranoia has been stated to me personally and others that I know of.

Senator KASSEBAUM. It could be paranoia, but it also probably really rests on some reality. I can easily see where some student would say, "Well, I didn't get this same type of attention. And if I had it, I could have done the same thing."

Ms. VOYLES. Again, we have the problem of where do you draw the line.

Senator KASSEBAUM. That's right. And I do think there has to be some set of standards there that all the students would have to meet. It just seems to me that would be the best training procedure. Who encourages the students to appeal when they have failed? And has this not grown considerably, these appeals, which have caused them a great deal of frustration with the training and how best to handle it?

Ms. VOYLES. The student actually belongs to a region that's sent him or her to the academy to be trained. So any appeals process belongs within the region where they're employed.

Senator KASSEBAUM. They're encouraged to appeal?

Ms. VOYLES. What do they have to lose? One thing I was not aware of until recently is, that if a student does appeal and they go back and they pull his training records and they find an error that will raise his grade, they count those points. If they find an error that would lower his grade, they can't count those. Why not? He has nothing to lose.

Senator KASSEBAUM. I'm sure that's true, but again, I wonder if that's really helping the training process.

Ms. VOYLES. That's partially what we had in mind. They are encouraged somewhere, and I don't know where it is done, but student rights have become paramount to any rights of the employee. I think we mention in our written testimony which was submitted about instructors who have had problems when they've stopped at a table at a club in the Oklahoma City area, and somebody said, "Oh, Hi, Charlie." He talked to that table of students, just being polite, and then moved on his way. And in more than one case, it has come about where an instructor has been severely criticized for fraternizing with students. So even in his own personal life in the city area, he encounters problems. And we seem to make the instructor's life miserable, when they are a fully qualified professional individual who has put in much time, energy and resource. We tend to treat this new hiree, who is a developmental, far better.

I don't know the answer, but it is a contributing factor to the lower morale.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Is this something that has been gathering some momentum over a period of time or just in the last couple of years?

Ms. VOYLES. It is not a new problem.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Did any of the instructors go out on strike?

Ms. VOYLES. No. As a matter of fact, everyone got together and agreed that we want to stay and support the agency in this particular—you see, they are very closely tied to PATCO. They leave PATCO in the field and come to the academy. They are not represented by PATCO, but when they return to the field, they will be again. And they are strong PATCO supporters. They still are in contact in the FTS for many job-related reasons, over the telephone with these individuals. They're very aware of what goes on in the field.

It was a personal crisis for them when PATCO walked out, and they hear all the news reports about how the agency is planning to rebuild the system through the academy. Now if they had chosen to walk out at that point, how would the agency rebuild the system? What better way to insure that the agency must hire their brothers back? Somewhere along the line, someone failed to recognize the supreme sacrifices that these people at the academy actually made, emotionally and in many other ways and their sincere desire to help build this program. They don't get one verbal pat on the back.

Senator KASSEBAUM. You mentioned that the disrespect by the agency was a contributing factor to the low morale of the instructors. What disrespect by the authority? What specifically?

Ms. VOYLES. One very good example is the recent legislation that specifically excluded academy employees.

Senator KASSEBAUM. But Mr. Helms spelled that out very carefully.

Ms. VOYLES. He gave us his reason, based on a live traffic situation. Why are these people who stayed on the job in the field—as you know, PATCO anticipated 15 percent would stay on the job because they were too close to retirement to risk it. Whatever their reasons for staying on the job, why are they more important than those people at the academy? I think even had these people in Oklahoma City been given any verbal recognition by the agency at

all, this legislation thing would not have upset them so greatly. It still would have upset them.

Senator KASSEBAUM. But it does seem to me at this particular point that there is quite a distinction between those who are working in the control towers and have stayed on, certainly with, I think, far more emotional stress, than the instructors at the academy, because they have had to cross picket lines. They've seen friends whom they've worked beside choose to leave, and that's an extremely difficult thing to deal with. I'm sure they're much closer to it than the instructors, plus the strain on their time has been greater. It's just a very different working relationship, and I would think the instructors themselves would recognize this, and I don't know that they would want to rotate right now, as a matter of fact, and go back into the tower.

Mr. EDWARDS. Let me address that, Madam Chairman. We have a number of controllers who would love to go back to the field. Mr. Helms states that we have a contract, referring to the 3-R order. What he failed to say was that they have chosen to waive and negate this contract and have imposed mandatory 9-month extensions. The way that they are doing this or what they're quoting as their ability to waive, when they get this contract, we interpret as completely illegal, based on the wording in that order.

However, this has not come up to the point yet where anyone has been utilized or held back because of that order.

He also mentions that people who stayed with us and then followed up and worked with live traffic were not included in that package. These people, some of them were out there just prior to, and only because of their contract that they had signed to come on board, are they here at the academy, and now they are being stifled from returning to the field, because they are needed here. The FAA recognizes that without the academy, the entire system will come to a screeching halt.

Ms. VOYLES. Let me make one quick point if I may, Madam Chairman. You mentioned that they probably would not want to go back to the field. As I mentioned earlier, many of the air traffic instructors had to downgrade to come to the academy. They could return to the field at a higher grade, and they could have the premium pay, the night differential pay, the holidays and the overtime, and all these little benefits in the new legislative package and be far better off moneywise. They could make considerably more money.

And when you talk about the fact that they're not controlling live traffic and so forth, I really don't feel that for a group that has pitched in like they have, true time-and-a-half for all the overtime hours they're working and some premium night differential pay is asking too much—they were not working nights before. As I said, that's one of the reasons they came to the academy, so they could have a normal family life for awhile, anyway. And now they are working rotating shifts, and they are working far more than 40 hours a week, not all of them, but many of them are.

Senator KASSEBAUM. We both agree, it's very different working conditions, particularly now with the strains that are on those in the tower, and I just think that does have to be recognized. And it does seem to me that perhaps there will be the opportunity for the

FAA to visit with the instructors about the rotating program and, as a matter of fact, give those who feel that they do want to go back to the field, the option to return, because I would guess that there are quite a few in the field now, who would be glad to rotate and go to the academy.

I think as there is an evaluation of that procedure at this point, that it would be worth some conversation and dialog, which evidently hasn't taken place between the two, an analysis of what would be one, best for the system and two, better working conditions all the way around.

But I can certainly understand and be supportive of the FAA's decision and the Department of Transportation on the pay package, that there is a different working atmosphere, obviously, between the work in the tower right now and that at the academy.

Ms. VOYLES. Maybe we should have requested that they revise the pay package in the legislation—where it makes it a Federal crime for anyone to kill an air traffic controller. Maybe what we should have asked for, in the way of recognition, was to make it a Federal crime to kill an academy instructor.

They really felt that they were under a great deal of pressure at the time when PATCO walked out, because they were well aware that they were the ones the agency was depending on to reconstruct the air traffic system.

Senator KASSEBAUM. How many instructors are there?

Ms. VOYLES. In air traffic, or altogether?

Senator KASSEBAUM. Altogether. How many are members of your organization?

Ms. VOYLES. Between 500 and 600.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Is that the entire instructing staff at the academy?

Ms. VOYLES. That is all nonsupervisory employees within the academy itself. The academy is, of course, a division of the Aeronautical Center.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Aside from the question of pay—and that seems to be one of the major causes of the difference right now—what do you think the major difficulty is in the relationship between the instructors and the agency?

Ms. VOYLES. A lack of appreciation.

Senator KASSEBAUM. I said "disrespect." And you said an example was the pay.

Ms. VOYLES. A lack of appreciation, a lack of any visibile sign that the agency appreciates the efforts they've gone to. They read in the intercoms, the newsletters and such—they're always printing letters, where various private agencies as well as Government agencies have written these letters, commending the individuals who remained on the job in the field, blah-blah-blah-blah. They never see or hear anything that commends them for what they are attempting to do to rebuild the system.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Had there been a pay differential in the past between the instructors and those in the field?

Ms. VOYLES. Just simply the night differential and the holiday pay. Instructors did not have to work those hours in order to gain normal night differentials or holiday pay. They had 5-day-a-week jobs.

The only other difference is—I wish I had a percentage for you, and I do not—but several of the air traffic option instructors were 14's in the field. They voluntarily downgraded to a 13 to be an instructor at the academy. They do this because they hope to gain career progression. They felt it was worth it to downgrade and come to the academy and spend this time. And they are normally very ambitious, career-oriented individuals. And management, I think, would do well to appreciate the talent they have.

Senator KASSEBAUM. There's not an appeal process by which they can request to go back to the field?

Mr. EDWARDS. No, that has been stifled by the word put out by the academy that you are on a mandatory 9-month extension—6 months if it involves a promotion.

And there is even some wording being put out on these promotion papers on the bottom, that we may refuse to release this individual if a job tender is offered.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Is this just a recent decision?

Mr. EDWARDS. Yes, since the August walkout.

Senator KASSEBAUM. After they leave the academy, do most of those who have been trained as teachers there become supervisors in the system, in the towers? They don't progress on to supervisory capacity in the tower?

Ms. VOYLES. The progression used to be very evident in the academy. It is not what it used to be by any means. Many of the instructors do not gain any real career progression by coming to the academy.

Senator KASSEBAUM. I thought you just said that was really one reason they came.

Ms. VOYLES. Many do. But the progression—the availability is just not there that needs to be there.

Mr. EDWARDS. This is again due to the facility closings or part-timings of both the flight service en route and terminal options, the consolidation cutback of personnel. The availability of slots to get into have become very limited, and these are being filled primarily now by field personnel because of the immediate need for this type of personnel in the field, and you cannot get an individual for 9 months and you have immediate need. That is obvious, where you're going to make your choice, from the person that is available.

Senator KASSEBAUM. I would think that there would be supervisory positions certainly that will be opening up. As was said, the retirement level is soon going to be reached by many who are in that position right now. So, I would think that would not be a future problem certainly at this point.

Ms. VOYLES. For those who remained on the job in the field I am sure they'll be very well in line to move into those positions, too. You cannot forget those individuals.

Senator KASSEBAUM. That's true.

Mr. EDWARDS. As it was stated earlier, a lot of this hinged on the merit promotion plan which has recently, in past months, been rewritten and does not allow for the same quality or level of credit to academy instructors that has been given to those working in the field.

You do gain some diversity points. But in a critical area, it only goes back for 5 years. And the new contract going on for 3 years,

you're now down to 2 years of field experience, whereas your counterpart in the field has 5 years.

And if the requirements are 3 years of field experience, you cannot hope to attain even those points to get on the panel, to hope to get the job.

Senator KASSEBAUM. I gather, from what you said, that your concern is, as obviously it would be, the morale of the teachers at the academy, not necessarily so much for the training itself of the air traffic controllers.

Ms. VOYLES. I hope that is not the impression we left. Of course we are concerned with the morale of the employees. That is our responsibility.

However, what we see are people who really care about the product that they produce out of the classroom. And we are sincerely concerned about the quality of training that they are able to give these individuals.

Senator KASSEBAUM. It seems to me that there's the potential for not a very productive situation, because you have instructors who obviously are now feeling that they are being left out, and this antagonism is going to be reflected in their teaching.

Ms. VOYLES. I think they are professional enough that the antagonism won't be reflected in the teaching. The problem there is that the antagonism could be a part of why they made the decision not to bootleg training material. It is against academy policy. They have historically done it in the past because they cared about students.

Now, when they're going to be in the limelight, this air traffic recovery program may have problems. And they don't want to be the ones to blame if it is doesn't go.

"Besides that, nobody even cares if we're doing a good job. So, why should we bother?" I'm sure some of that is thrown in there, too. But I don't think you'll ever find any more caring group of individuals when it comes to putting forth a quality product as far as the student that they train. They put a lot into it.

Mr. EDWARDS. I'd like to say one other thing here. I believe it was Mr. Demps who said that there is an avenue for this bootlegging-of-materials type of situation. He called that the standardization committee.

I would like to say that I know of at least one option in the air traffic that this committee has not met in over a year.

Senator KASSEBAUM. The standardization committee?

Mr. EDWARDS. Yes, which goes well beyond August.

So, initiated as a viable alternative, if it was indeed, and were to perform as setup, it could very well be. However, this is still not going to provide the individual attention on the spur-of-the-moment situation. This is what this individual needs to grasp this situation that I am confronting him with now in the classroom.

You can't take that and go present that to a committee and say, "Well, 3 months, 4 months, 5 months, 6 months down the road, this is going to help somebody." That's fine. But what do you do for the individual that's in the classroom at this time and will be gone long before the committee ever meets.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Do the instructors have means of meeting together with Mr. Demps or with the agency people here to discuss,

say, the standardization—the work of the standardization committee, your concerns about it, the question of morale?

Ms. VOYLES. Many opportunties are provided.

Senator KASSEBAUM. So there is a good avenue of opportunity.

Ms. VOYLES. I don't know how good the avenue is, but many opportunities are provided on both sides.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Thank you very much. I really appreciate your being here and helping get some understanding of this for the record.

Ms. VOYLES. Thank you for the opportunity.

[The statement follows:]

STATEMENT OF JOHN EDWARDS, VICE PRESIDENT, AIR TRAFFIC, PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AERONAUTICAL CENTER EMPLOYEES

The problems that plague the FAA Academy instructor workforce are complex, beginning prior to their arrival at the Academy.

The majority of instructors agree to come to the FAA Academy for career progression. They uproot their families; disrupting their social lives and abandoning their community involvement. The instructor and his/her family endure the mental anguish of selling and buying a home, sometimes bearing the financial burden of two house payments before they are reestablished in Oklahoma City. Many of them discover too late that the high interest rate is going to double or tripple the amount they have been paying on a house payment, that they may be forced to settle for a much smaller house than they previously occupied, or maybe even both. (The Oklahoma State Board of Realtors show the average cost of a home sold in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area from last October to date was $72,454.00. New construction was set at $42 to $46 per square foot)

In addition, it is not uncommon for the air traffic controller to downgrade from a GS–14 to a GS–13 when leaving the field for an Academy instructor assignment. The actual downgrade may not cost them money, but the loss of night differential, premium and holiday pay, etc., does. At this point, they tell themselves that the straight daytime hours with weekends off and time to spend with their families, is of sufficient benefit to make up for the loss in pay.

After one or two 3–R (agreement to return to the field) tours (approximately 3 to 5 years) the instructing air traffic controller anticipates promotion opportunity back to the geographical area they left and so feel they can afford to lose money on a short term basis in order to gain career progression opportunities.

These men and women are selected for instructor positions because they have the technical knowledge necessary to effectively train others in a one-of-a-kind occupation. In order to play a part in the Agency's training mission, the new instructor must successfully complete Academy classes dealing with professionalism, presentation technique, and human relations, before they ever enter the classroom. In effect they take on a whole new occupation for which they have sacrificed much, only to discover they are to be treated with total disrespect by the Agency. A classic example of this disrespect is the response PAACE received this summer while in contract negotiations. When PAACE attempted to get an agreement for the Agency to move the family of a deceased 3–R instructor back to their geographical area of residence prior to the deceased employee's acceptance of a temporary Academy assignment—we were told "They knew what they were getting into when they came here." This callous phrase is indicative of the general attitude felt by the Academy instructor.

The real slap in the face came with the recent legislation (See Attachment #1) to increase benefits and provide premium pay for Air Traffic and Airway Facilities field personnel. This same legislation specifically excludes FAA Academy personnel. While excluding the Academy personnel, premium pay is also purposed for field personnel to conduct on-the-job field training.

The Academy instructor must now put forth their best effort to rebuild the air traffic control system. This must be done without recognition of any form. After all, "They knew what they were getting into when they came here." One of the incentives that brought the instructor to the Academy was "regular" hours and now they have been put back into a posture of shift work, but without any of the newly legislated benefits they could be receiving in the field. As these men and women give more and more of themselves in an effort to accomplish the Agency mission, while realizing less and less accomplishment or recognition, the morale sinks lower and lower.

The problems encountered in the classroom are numerous. As more problems have developed, more restraints are placed on the instructor workforce. The instructor must exercise extreme caution not to give the student any opportunity to appeal a failing grade based on discrimination, or any type of fraternization. The Academy has created a very real paranoia in its attempts to reduce, prevent, or eliminate chances of student appeals, complaints to their congressional representatives, etc.

The Academy requires personal motivation and enthusiasm as a critical job element (CJE) on the instructor's performance appraisal (See Attachment #2). A score of 0 on any one CJE requires a mandatory unsatisfactory rating for the entire appraisal period. Yet the Academy has stifled the instructor and rigidly structured the training presentations, leaving no latitude for personal motivation. An example of this is a situation involving Mr. John Edwards (Academy instructor in the Flight Service Option of Air Traffic). Thirty-six students were brought in to the Academy on the same date and then split into 2 classes of 18 students each.

These 2 classes are then referred to as "sister" classes, with the same beginning and ending dates. They are taught by different instructors in different classrooms. Mr. Edwards designed a practice exercise for his students that could easily be changed to fit different situations. This same exercise was not available to the sister class. Mr. Edwards was verbally reprimanded and threatened with a low performance rating for "boot-legging" training material. The reason for the reprimand was based on the possibility that a failing student in the sister class could file discrimination for not being provided equal learning opportunity.

Until the ATRP was activated, many instructors "boot-legged" study material to their students. Instructors who provided their students with study aids, for self-help outside the classroom, felt such material got many students through the course that would otherwise have failed. Since the ATRP began, instructors have collectively ceased the practice of giving any student extra materials.

Inadvertantly, students are actually encouraged to appeal a failing grade. When their grades are reviewed, points found in their favor must be added to the final score, while an error resulting in a loss of points is not allowed to reduce their grade. Thus, the student has nothing to lose by filing a complaint or appealing to a congressional representative.

Fraternization cases are also carried to the extreme. Instructors have been reprimanded for stopping to talk to students at another table in an Oklahoma City club.

Not only does the air traffic controller in the field receive praise and monetary reward for staying on the job (PAACE was in the midst of contract negotiations when their PATCO affiliate went on strike and the Academy instructors chose to remain on the job) but the student, who is really a newly hired developmental, has more freedom in the Oklahoma City area to conduct their personal lives than the FAA air traffic control Academy instructor.

Students should have rights, but we are granting people who are newly hired by the Agency into a developmental position, their rights over and above, and at the expense of, fully qualified professional employees.

The Academy is steadily evolving into a screening organization instead of the professional training institution it was designed to be. The Academy and the Academy instructor must be guaranteed more authority and lattitude in dealing with student personnel.

Changes must be made to improve all FAA Academy instructor morale. Improvements to the 3-R program have been drafted (See Attachment No. 3). Approval of this draft will help reduce the large turnover in staffing and provide more continuity to the training program. This change alone will not be sufficient to entice Air Traffic Controllers, Airway Facilities Specialists, Pilots and Field Flight Inspectors to remain at the Academy or make the necessary sacrifices to come to the Academy.

The Academy instructors have demonstrated their genuine desire to support the Agency and to rebuild the air traffic system. The instructor work force and the FAA Academy must have legislative support and morale boosting recognition to enable them to become the genuinely effective team that will bring the system back to its peak capacity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide a premium night differential percentage for Academy instructors.
2. Authorize all Academy instructors to be paid true time-and-a-half for all hours over forty, regardless of existing ceilings on allowable yearly earnings.
3. Expedite approval of changes to the 3-R program (Order 3330.6B).
4. Grant the instructors more latitude and authority in the classroom by converting them to the highest first line supervisory position applicable within their area of

expertise. (This action would also provide incentive to come to the Academy and enhance their career progression.)

5. Actively communicate Agency support and recognition.

ATTACHMENT I

Sections 11/12. These sections would entitle air traffic controllers to 10 percent premium pay for providing on-the-job training to other controllers who are engaged in separating and controlling live air traffic. It would not apply to instructors at the FAA Academy where all training is performed under simulated air traffic conditions. The controller would be entitled to receive premium pay only for the time in which such on-the-job training is being given.

ATTACHMENT II

GENERAL PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL DOCUMENT

	Title/Series/Grade	Appraisal From period

Section V - Job Element (Critical and Other) Appraisal Form

Instructions:
1. Complete a Job Element Appraisal Form for each job element.
2. The percent of relative importance of each critical job element must be at least 10% and not more than 100%.
3. Actual performance need not be described if it is same as performance standards.
4. A job element Score of 0 for any C.E. REQUIRES an annual performance rating of "Unsatisfactory."

1. No. 3 of 11	2. ☒ CJE ☐ OJE	3. Job Element (Identify) Instruction	4. The Relative I of this Job Ele.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD(S) (Fully Acceptable Level)	6. DESCRIBE ACTUAL PERFORMANCE (Use as many additional copies of Page 2a as necessary to complete documentation of this job element. Draw horizontal line after performance under each standard is describ
5. Reinforcement Summaries: Summaries were used prior to presenting new instructional areas or sets of information to reinforce main ideas and key points. The final summary effectively aided retention and stressed key points to remember and tied directly to lesson objectives.	
6. Use of Training Aids/Materials: Training aids and supportive material were presented in a logical sequence and effectively used.	
7. Technical Knowledge/Skills: Teaching reflected a high degree of technical proficiency. Technical questions were met with confidence and satisfactory answers were provided.	
8. Interest & Motivation: The instructor demonstrated interest in the subject and provided motivation through personal enthusiasm.	Page 7

7. Job Element Score(JES) is: Fails to Meet ☐ Meets ☐ Exceeds

ATTACHMENT III

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION,
Oklahoma City, Okla., November 6, 1981.

MR. ARTHUR M. HEATH,
President, Professional Association of Aeronautical Center Employees,
Oklahoma City, Okla.

DEAR MR. HEATH: Enclosed for your review and comment is an agency-proposed change to Chapter 4, Order 3330.6B, Reemployment, Restoration and Return Rights (3R) Program.

This particular change involves only pages 25–28. However, telephone contact with the office originating the change has confirmed that pages 23 and 24 will be issued as coordinated in March 1980 (copy enclosed). Your organization had an opportunity to comment on pages 23 and 24 at that time.

The March 1980 pages provide for initial 3R tours at the Academy of 3 years. The new pages 25–28 provide for forfeiture of 3R when mutually agreed upon by the Aeronautical Center and the employee. Taken together, these changes are in conformance with our Letter of Understanding—3R Program, dated October 16, 1981.

Please provide me any written or oral comments on the new pages 25–28 by November 19, 1981.

Sincerely,

EDWIN S. HARRIS,
Superintendent, FAA Academy.

Enclosures.

CHANGE

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

3330.6B CHG

Cancellation Date:

SUBJ: Reemployment, Restoration, and Return Rights Program

1. PURPOSE. This change modifies the rotation policy for FAA Academy Instructor positions by allowing employees to forfeit return rights to their parent region. Forfeiture is contingent upon the mutual agreement of the Aeronautical Center and the employee, the continuing need for the employees skills and fully acceptable past performance as an instructor.

PAGE CONTROL CHART

Remove Pages	Dated	Insert Pages	Dated
25	5/21/76	25	
26	5/21/76	26	
27 (thru 28)	5/21/76	27 (thru 28)	

Distribution: (A-WXYZ-2; A-FOF (Limited))

Initiated By:

46. *Scheduling Employees for Return.*—Eligible employees shall be scheduled for return to their parent organizations in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph. When flexibility permits, careful consideration should be given, not only to the needs of the Academy, but to the needs of the parent organization and the personal desires of the employee as well.

a. *After Completing One Tour.*—Employees are normally expected to serve two tours. However, the Director of the Aeronautical Center, or his designee, may disapprove a second tour and return the employee to his parent organization if it is in the best interests of the agency to do so.

b. *After Completing Two or Three Consecutive Tours.*—

(1) When an employee has served two consecutive tours of duty, he/she may, at the option of the Aeronautical Center, be returned to the parent organization. This option may be exercised on an individual case-by-case basis or by a standard rotation policy.

(2) The employee, the Aeronautical Center and the parent organization may mutually agree to a third consecutive tour with the extension of return rights to the end of such tour.

(3) At the completion of three tours, an employee must be returned to the parent organization unless the employee and the Aeronautical Center mutually agree to the forfeiture of return rights. Forfeiture of return rights is contingent upon the continuing need for the employee's specific skills and on a record of performance ratings at or above the fully acceptable level while serving as an instructor. If return rights are not forfeited, an extension of up to 9 months may be granted by the Aeronautical Center in the event of critical need or unusual employee hardship.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Thank you.

Mr. King, who is Chairman of the National Transportation and Safety Board, is testifying over on the House side. When his testimony is completed over there—they think it may be about noon before he gets here.

I would just like to suggest that his testimony be made a matter of record, and that we will submit some questions, written questions to him for answer.

[The statement follows:]

STATEMENT OF JAMES B. KING, CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Madam Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss controller training and the findings of the air traffic control Special Investigation that was recently completed by the National Transportation Safety Board.

Before I go into the findings of our Special Investigation, I would like to introduce the Safety Board staff members who have accompanied me today. To my right is Mr. Frank T. Taylor, Director, Bureau of Accident Investigation, and to my left is Mr. David F. Thomas, Air Safety Investigator, Aviation Accident Division, Bureau of Accident Investigation.

While the National Transportation Safety Board's Special Investigation explored a number of areas relating to the safety of the air traffic control system, my remarks today will focus on the area of concern to this Subcommittee today, controller training.

The Safety Board's investigation explored several major issues in the training and use of controllers, including the staffing, curriculum, and standards for the training program at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and at individual air traffic control facilities. The Safety Board examined the projections of when center training programs would provide new controllers to field facilities, and the training problems that might be caused by the large number of new controllers in the facilities. Finally, programs for the use and training of controllers without center training and of military controllers were examined to determine if standards of proficiency and safety were being maintained.

In general, the Safety Board determined there have been no significant modifications of the existing center and facility training programs to qualify controllers to the full performance level. The curriculum, training procedures, and performance standards have not been changed from pre-strike programs. Only two areas of the training and qualification procedure were changed: the time necessary to complete the training requirements for full performance level, and the emphasis on a control-

ler being qualified to fill every position at a facility. Facility supervisors and training personnel stated that these modifications of pre-strike methods in fact increase the efficiency of the training program without affecting proficiency or safety.

The first change in training methods—accomplished without any change in the curriculum—was to accelerate the training of the replacement controllers. All facility supervisors stated that the previous training programs were spread over the time required to promote an individual to the full performance level. Many facility managers and training officers expressed the opinion that a full performance level of proficiency could be reached by the average developmental controller in about 24 months. They said that a typical new controller probably should be able to attain an operational level of proficiency at radar positions after 6 to 8 months of training. The supervisiors and training officers stated that this progression did not represent any compromise of previous practice, since most controllers could have been trained to the full performance level earlier had it been possible under the program in effect before August 3, 1981.

The second change involves the concept of "operational controller." As defined by the Federal Aviation Administration, an operational controller is a full performance level controller or a developmental controller who is certified on two or more sectors or control positions. Before the strike a developmental controller would train on a sector or position, become certified, and move to training on the next sector. This rotation would continue until the developmental controller was certified on all sectors in an area of specialization and the full performance level was reached. The present policy at many of the most severely affected facilities is one of temporary specialization. Now a developmental controller who, for example, has been certified on two sectors will remain on those sectors rather than moving on to train on new sectors. The result is an operational controller who is fully qualified to control traffic, but who is not available to be used throughout the facility. Consequently, the present practice involves an acceptance of reduced flexibility but not reduced qualifications of a controller. It is the Federal Aviation Administration's stated intention, however, to eventually qualify the operational controller at all sectors as full performance level controllers. The programs give a facility the capability to train and qualify more individuals since the operational controller does not under the regulations continue to need the supervision of a full performance level controller for on-the-job training. It also increases the number of controllers qualified to work each sector.

We are told that the newly hired controllers will receive training identical to that given to controllers before the strike. The Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center is now operating 3 shifts to train newly hired controllers. The historical failure rate for trainees at the center has been about 26 percent for the terminal specialty program and about 33 percent for the trainees who are to be assigned to air route traffic control centers. The Board was informed by the Federal Aviation Administration that the first classes which graduate from the center will have a higher failure rate than the previously established rates. The students in these classes were the applicants who were on the Civil Service register on or before August 3 and who, according to the Federal Aviation Administration, had scores in the 85 percent range. The applications on that register with the higher scores had entered previous controller classes. However, after October 1981, we have been told that the new admission test will be administered to insure that a higher caliber application is selected. The Federal Aviation Administration believes the new test should lower the failure rate and make the initial training program more productive. However, the Safety Board has not been able to evaluate the success of the new admission test since it is too early to draw conclusions based on the newly graduated developmental controllers.

The Federal Aviation Administration projected a requirement for 12,500 operational controllers by January 1, 1984. This workforce level requires that about 5,900 controllers must be trained to an operational level in 2 years and 5 months. Our investigation indicates that this goal will be difficult to attain. We believe that the most optimistic projection of the number of operational controllers available by January 1, 1984 is about 11,800. The figure could very likely be 500 to 1,000 lower. Additionally retirements within the controller workforce could change the figures of available controllers by 7 to 9 percent a year if retirement rates match previous years.

Despite the fact that the full number of operational controllers required by the air traffic control system will not be available until 1985, the Federal Aviation Administration should have sufficient controllers through continued use of the supervisory and staff personnel who are now working as controllers. It is likely that by January 1, 1984, there will be between 13,000 and 14,000 operational controllers and controllers drawn from staff and supervisory personnel.

The controller workforce will probably not reach the projected level until sometime in 1985. As a result, the Safety Board believes that operation of the air traffic control system will probably involve limited traffic capacity, extended workweeks, and the performance of controller duties by air traffic control staff and supervisory personnel for the next 2 to 3 years.

There are several problems the Federal Aviation Administration will face in hiring and training more than 7,400 new controllers. Maintaining high standards to insure a well-trained controller force is the most important task the Federal Aviation Administration must accomplish in this respect. Some facilities may be pressed to conduct training functions while trying to maintain present air traffic levels. Most training personnel have been working as controllers to meet the controller force requirements. Although a high priority has been placed on training personnel in facilities, some of the facilities with the fewest numbers of controllers may have to reduce air traffic capacity to free controllers for training duty.

Most controller training is accomplished during on-the-job training with another qualified controller. The great amount of on-the-job training that will be required for the new controllers will increase the workload of the current controller workforce, and may contribute to general levels of fatigue. Additionally, many controllers stated that they did not like to perform training duties. The shortage of qualified controllers at many facilities and the requirement for substantial amounts of on-the-job training will be a problem that the Federal Aviation Administration must manage very carefully in order to produce a high quality controller force. It will require close supervision of on-the-job training programs, improved first line supervision of controllers, and the management of the air traffic volume of each facility in relation to the capability of the facility to both control traffic and conduct meaningful training programs.

Madam Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I will be happy to furnish for the record a copy of the Board's Special Investigation Report on the air traffic control system, and I am prepared to answer any questions you may have.

[The following information was subsequently received for the record:]

QUESTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE AND THE ANSWERS THERETO

Question. Does the Board have any recommendations for achieving full operational air traffic control system capacity sooner? For instance, if more money was made available to the FAA by Congress, would the FAA be able to modify its training program so that full capacity could be achieved prior to the 1985 date?

Answer. The capacity of the air traffic control system duirng the rebuilding years will depend on the numbers of qualified controllers who are operating the system. The training of new controllers to the level of proficiency required to allow them to be productive in the ATC system requires a significant period of time—between 12 and 36 months for most new candidates. The Safety Board believes that if the training program was reduced from prestrike levels, or if the curriculum was changed, there would be a reduction of safety in the system. Therefore, we believe that the restoration of the capacity of the ATC system will not be accelerated significantly by more money, but rather must be tied to the time that is required for new controllers to complete the established training programs.

Question. In your assessment of the air traffic controller training system, did you or your representatives obeerve the on-the-job training at the en route centers and in the control towers?

Answer. Our investigators did observe some on-the-job training at various en route centers, terminal facilities and control towers. However, during the August through early October timeframe, the really heavy training requirements had not yet started. Our investigators did focus on the training capabilities of the ATC system, and studied the proposed training courses and standards of performance.

Question. Does the Board have any recommendations as to how the FAA might accelerate training of newly accredited air traffice controllers in the towers and at the en route centers? This could accelerate the process of getting controllers equipped to handle the demands placed on them and to increase capacity at en route centers and control towers.

Answer. The Safety Board does not believe that the FAA will be able to accelerate the training of the new controllers to any significant degree without reducing the level of air safety. The controllers training programs have much classroom work; however, most of the training is on-the-job training with fully qualified controllers.

Many specific skills must be developed during the on-the-job training in order to have a competent, safe controller. Any acceleration beyond the ability of the controller to learn would be unsafe, and would not bring the system back to full capacity more quickly.

Question. Do you believe that the FAA should contract out for training needed at the en route centers and control towers? What availability exists for the FAA to contract out? In other words, how many individuals does the Board estimate could be brought in to the FAA system by contracting out to assist in the on-the-job training demands?

Answer. The FAA would probably have difficulty contracting out for on-the-job training requirements. On-the-job training is conducted by fully qualified controllers in a particular facility, and the training is unique to the particular facility. It involves instruction on the airspace around the facility, applicable letters of agreement, and specific procedures. Only a person who was very familiar with the facility could administer on-the-job training. If the FAA wanted to contract out this training, they would first have to train the people who they wanted to bring in to train the new controllers.

The FAA has hired some retired and medically disqualified controllers to do classroom instruction in the facilities. This training could be handled on a contract basis, although it would not have a significant impact on the total training effort. Ultimately, only the FAA can conduct large scale on-the-job training of the controllers.

Question. In the Board's assessment, the system will not be at full controller replacement levels until 1985. Does this also mean that the air traffic control system will be operating at reduced levels until sometime in 1985? At what point in 1985 does the Board estimate the system will return to full functioning levels?

Answer. The Safety Board's investigation determined that the full numbers of operational controllers will probably not be trained and available to the FAA until mid to late 1984. It will be another year until these controllers reach the full performance level. Until this time—mid 1984 through 1985—the ATC system will probably be operating at reduced traffic levels. There may be some incidents of controllers working more than a 40-hour week, and staff and supervisory personnel working as controllers to insure that an adequate number of controllers are constantly available.

Senator KASSEBAUM. If there is that uncertainty, I don't think it's that important to hold everyone for half an hour.

Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:35 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]